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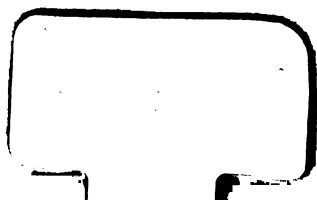
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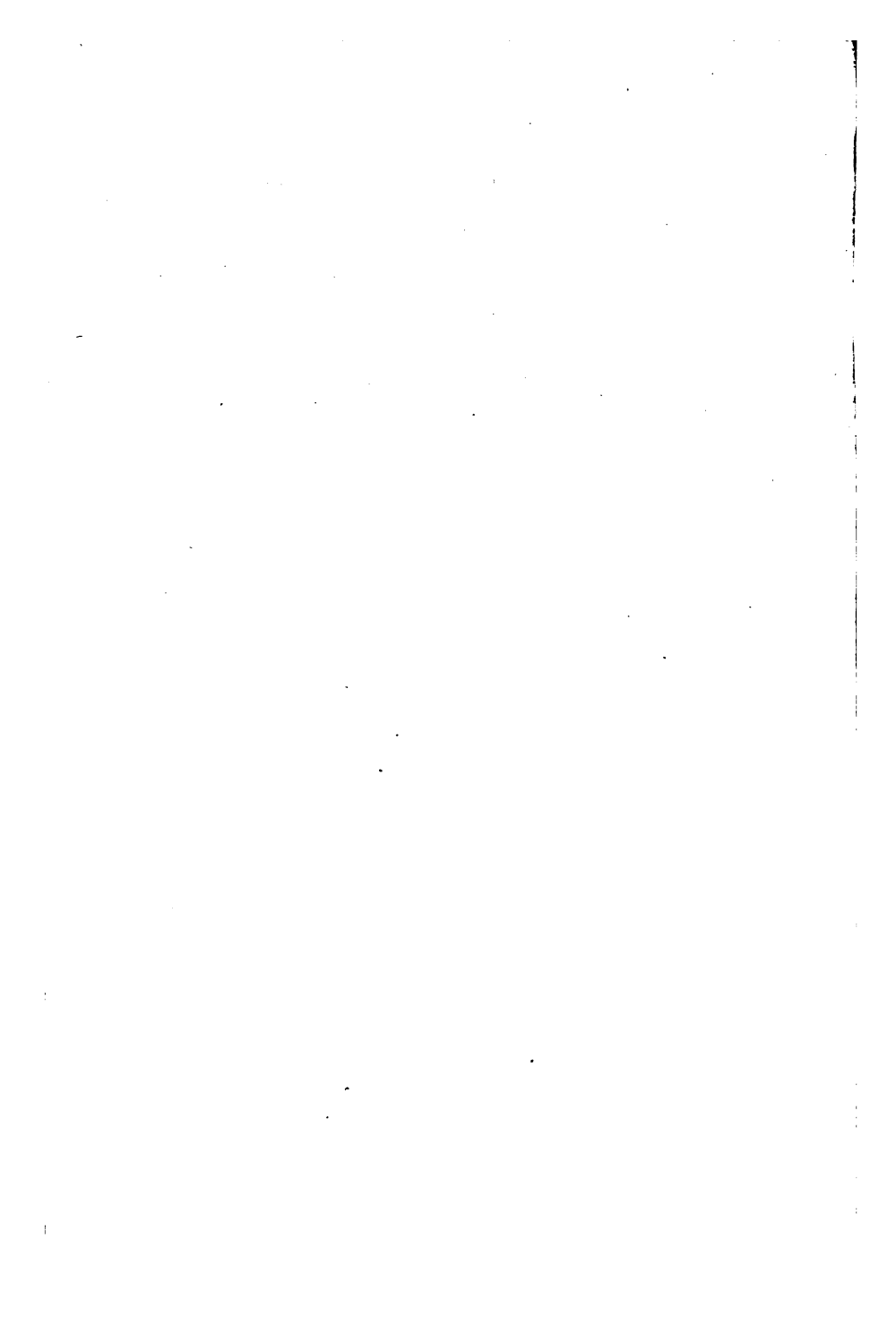
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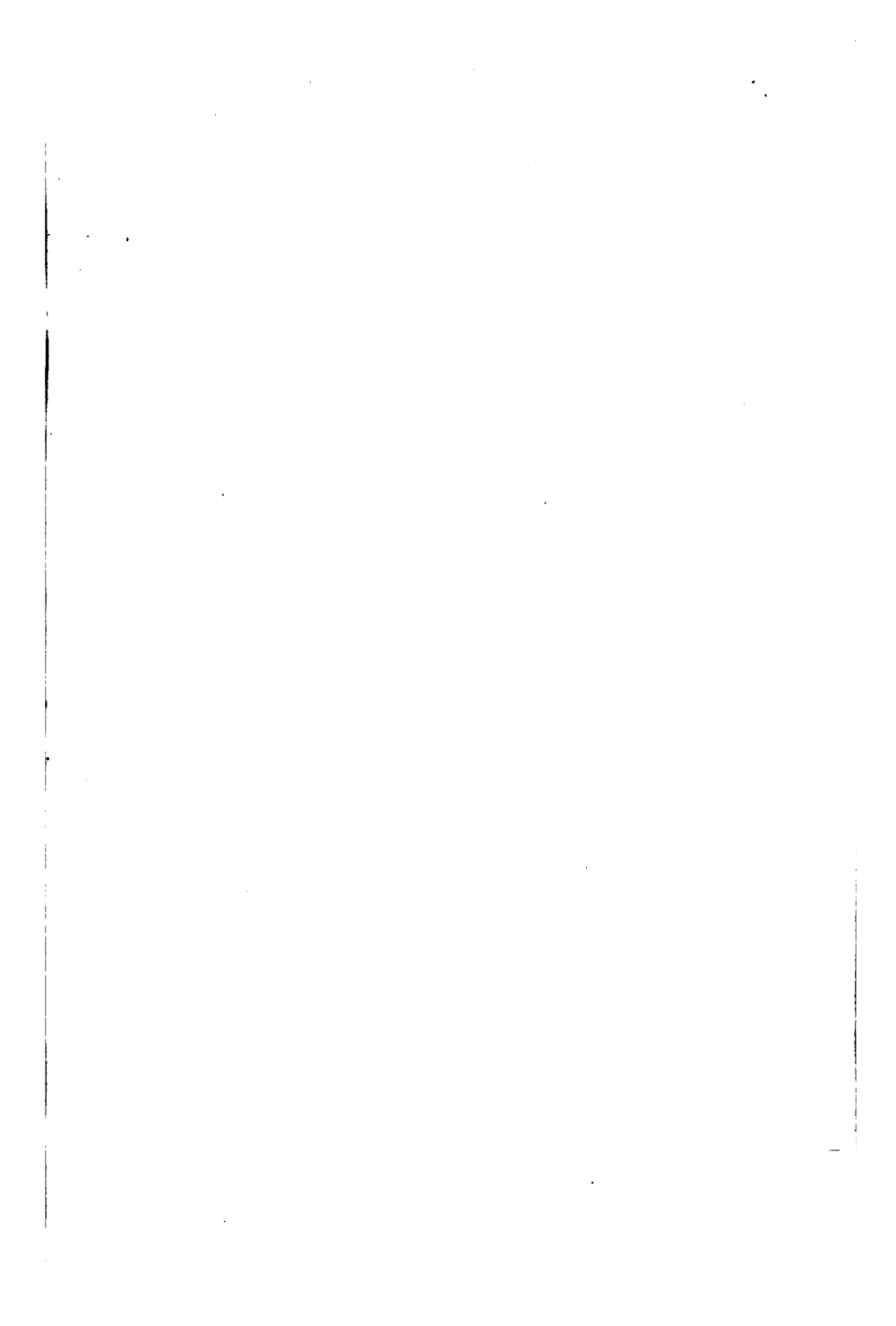
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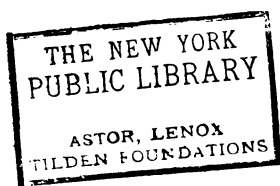








"Come along, Chad. Put up your book; we're going a-fishing."



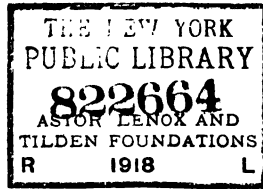
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JESSIE'S : : :
ACQUISITION
OR
A SUMMER AT
THE OLD HOMESTEAD

BY
LUANA E. BURGESS

THE McLEAN CO.,
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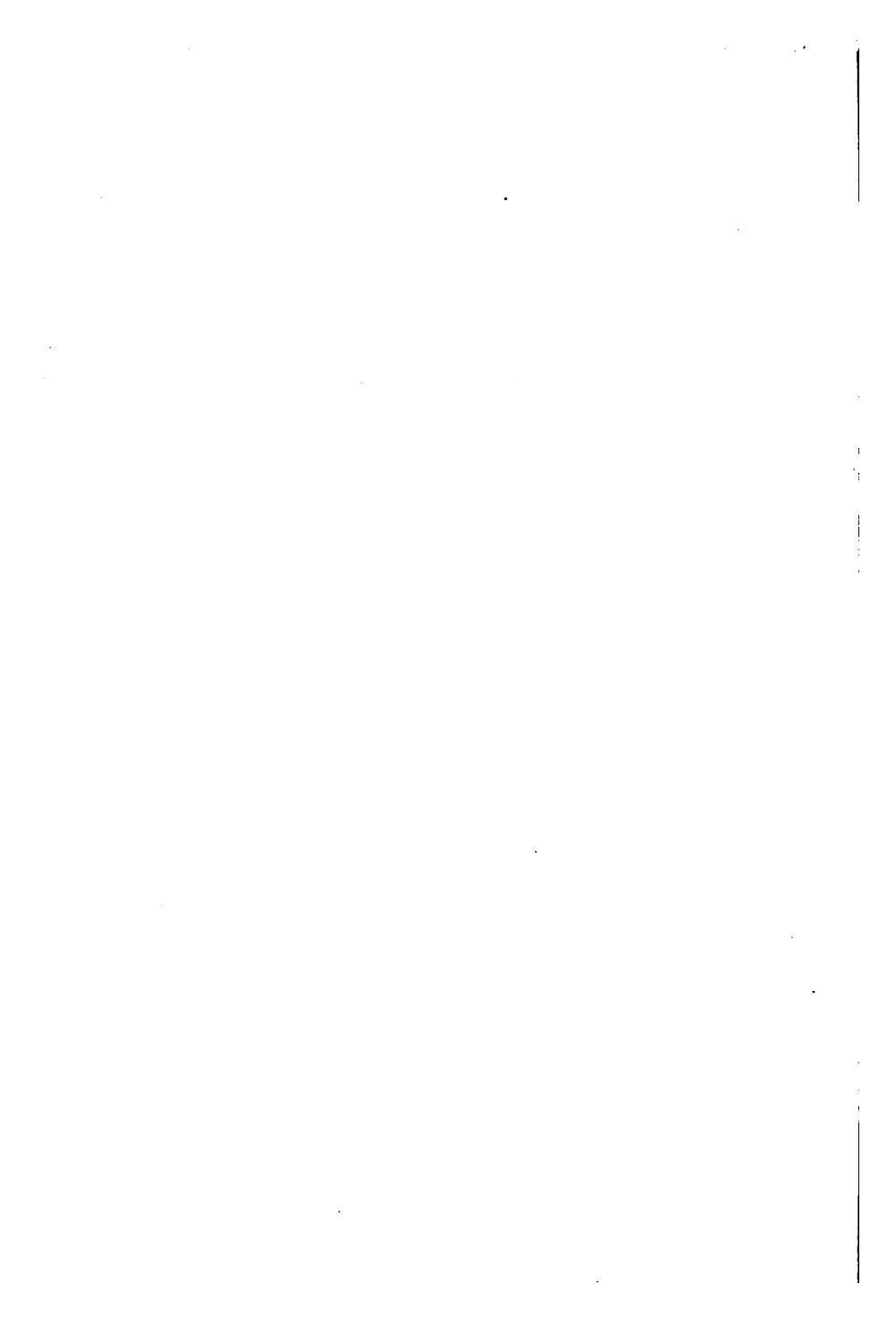
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*This little book is lovingly
Dedicated
to my childhood's mate—my
dear twin sister*

Louise,

from whom I have been many years separated, but whose presence was felt in Memory's chamber with an intense realization, while writing this little narrative.

* Subscribing Journalist - Jan 30. 18



CHAPTER I.

A round rosy face, subject to many changes like the moods of its owner, eyes that shaded from blue to gray, auburn hair whose possessor stoutly averred was not red, and a plump form. This was Jessie Attwood.

Her oldest brother Alfred with whom she frequently quarreled one minute and made up the next, said, "Jet is all right, except a little too much pepper in her composition."

Amy often regretted that her younger sister was so much of a tomboy, and wished she could be more ladylike, while Jessie's twin brother Chadsworth, said, "She is the very best one of our entire outfit, and worth a dozen of your ladylike girls, and as for pepper, it is needed once in awhile hereabouts."

On this June morning the Attwood young people were assembled in the library and as Jessie expressed it "a storm seemed to be brewing," though to all appearances she did not fear it, for she was whistling little melodies and rounding them up with a

series of bird-calls; Alfred nervously drumming his fingers; Amy sat serenely at some light fancy work, while Chadsworth with a book, was curled up in the window seat. At Jessie's feet sat a large maltese cat, which was industriously scrubbing up his white nose with a great white velvety paw.

"For pity sake Jet, do stop that whistle!" said Amy, "it goes through one's head like a penny trumpet. I'm glad you're going to Uncle John's this summer. When you get there, take your whistle out into one of Uncle's broad fields, and let it run. There will be plenty of room there for you to whistle and romp to your entire satisfaction."

"I hope so, really; in the meantime your nerves, Miss Prim, will get a good rest, but how you will miss me and my whistle Amy dear."

"I shall miss you Jet," said Alfred. "I do think this splitting up of our family for the summer, is the craziest plan I ever heard of, anyway," and Alfred gave the piano stool an angry whirl, and reached down to pick up the cat, but Barstow's mis-

tress made a quick dash and grabbed him up saying:—

“No, Alf, you can’t whirl *my* cat.”

“I had no intention of doing so.”

“Oh!” said Jessie demurely,—“I thought you began to show off your vexation with the piano stool, next the cat, then after that I supposed Amy, Chad and I, would be sent flying. But why grumble so over Chad and I going to Uncle John’s? Mother, Amy and you will make such a genteel party, you won’t need us, surely.”

“Oh it will be a dry party without you. There is no fun in Amy, altogether too dignified for fun, but a very proper young lady, of course.”

“If you call tearing around like a big tomboy, fun, then I hardly think I will attempt to furnish any for you, Mr. Alfred, and you can call me dignified all you please;” and Amy looked scornfully at her brother and sister. “I think an entire summer at Uncle John’s will finish Jessie’s accomplishments in the tomboy line.”

“You’ll get lots of freckles, Jet, and you know you’re awfully afraid of them,” said Alfred.

"That's the only thing I am afraid of," said Jessie stoutly, "and I think it was just delightful in Uncle John and Aunt Beth to invite us all to spend the summer with them. Chad and I are going sure; you know father says it will do more for Chad than all the sea air and medicines have done. He will come back in October, fat and brown."

"And Miss Jessie Attwood ditto; but please on your return with your country airs and graces, put in your first appearance at the kitchen door."

"Alf Attwood! You ought to be ashamed of that speech," said Jessie hotly. "One might suppose to hear you talk, that Uncle John's family was beyond the pale of ordinary refinement even. I think it positively shameful in you so I do,"—and she stroked Barstow's coat vigorously.

"Now Jet, I didn't intimate any such a thing, and don't fly off at a tangent, please. Uncle John's people are fine, every one of them, but you must know that an entire season spent with rustic surroundings is not to be compared to one passed with a party of fashionables.

"Now as I was at Uncle John's two years

ago let me describe to you little spit-fire, a feature or two of life as it is there,"—and Alfred sat down beside his sister who readily accepted the flag of truce by saying—"All right Dandy. Chad, take your nose out of that book and listen to your older and experienced brother, who has been to college."

"Well, to begin with, Aunt Beth makes the *loveliest* cream biscuits you ever dreamed of, and *such* delicious strawberry short-cakes,"—

"I daresay the cream biscuits and strawberry shortcakes are down on the family record;" dryly commented Amy.

"Let the eatables wait until we hear from the *rest of the family*," suggested Chadworth.

"You'll be sure to love Aunt Beth; every one does I guess. Of course we all remember Uncle John's last visit here; well, he is just the same at home, and is so much like father,"—

"And one of the grandest of men too,"—chimed in Jessie.

"Harry and Will are bouncing nice fellows,—but excuse me my high tempered little sister, they are somewhat green"—and

Alfred made a pretense of dodging a box on the ear.

"Go on Ripeness with your description of our relatives," said Jessie tartly.

"They'll blush up to the tops of their heads when they see your pretty face Jet, especially if they catch you looking at them. Let me see, they have been away at school for the past year, and possibly they have mended their blushes. Then there is Kittie a shy little puss about your age Jet, and Fred the youngest.

"Not the least by any means is Irish Norah, who has been there at Uncle John's for years, and imagines she rules the kitchen, with the rest of the house thrown in. She is loyal to the boys I tell you. She looked me over as if she thought me a mere girl for strength, and said with either pity or scorn in her voice;—"If ye'z would toss the hay and do the wurruk of the two lads, ye'd be as brawny and sthrong as they.'

"I wanted to tell her that I didn't care to be as brown as they were, but had I done so, I fancy she would have flourished the rolling-pin about my head, for she says her 'bys are the fairest and foinest in the land.'

"Every living creature at Uncle John's

is awake and flying about early in the morning. Only think of eating your breakfast at 7 o'clock every morning this summer!"

"Oh it will be delightful!" said Jessie. We are in for a good time Chad, and you'll get strong and fat won't you?"

"That will shorten his long nose I hope," said Amy who considered Chadworth's nose a particular grievance and a blight on the good looks of the family; "and Jet, you can play tomboy in your last summer's dresses; that will lessen the work and worry of getting off."

"You'll see at a glance that Madame Fashion does not visit Aunt Beth very often," said Alfred.

"If she did you would be more anxious to visit them too, but all the better for me, and a fine time ahead for the two youngest of this family. Barstow really ought to go with us, hadn't you—but dear?"

Barstow responded by opening his eyes and lazily shutting them again.

"Oh yes, by all means," said Alfred. He would proceed at once to immortalize himself by swallowing a brood of Aunt Beth's little fluffy chicks."

"Well that settles the question and Barstow must consider himself not invited, but do you know," and Jessie's face took on a serious look, "I think father is greatly disappointed over the fact that we are not all going together to Uncle John's?"

"Well perhaps he is, but he always seems to consider that Mamma is capable of deciding for herself," said Amy "and her heart is set upon going to the mountains with our friends, and he knows it. Father can divide his vacation with us there, and with you at Uncle John's, so after all it is arranged nicely for him, I think." Jessie lifted her eyebrows, and gave a suggestive—"umph"—perhaps Father would enjoy having a hand in the arranging of his own matters this time, at least."

CHAPTER II.

There was a look of disappointment on William Attwood's face as he walked along the crowded thoroughfare to his place of business this morning in early summer.

"Oh for a whiff of the breezes that blow through the old orchard at Fawndale this morning," he mused. "Were I there I would not need the calendar to tell me it was June. The petals from the cherry blossoms are falling in little showers like snow, and the apple trees in their pink and white glory, are opening and in a few days the air will be filled with their delicious perfume—the big flat rock back of the old barn with the two butternut trees growing up tall and willowy upon either side—how I long to stretch myself upon it as when a lad, and look lazily up into the tree tops as they bend and whisper to each other."

Greatly as Mr. Attwood wished his family to forego a visit to some fashionable resort, and spend an entire season among the Eastern hills of Pennsylvania at the dear old home of his childhood, his wife

never favored the plan. City born and bred she had seen but little of farm life, and then at a very unfavorable time of the year when the leafless trees and bare fields looked bleak and cheerless. After her widowed mother-in-law passed away, her visits to the farm ceased. She admired brother John's wife and would say—"Sister Beth has her niche and she fills it admirably; she would not fit into mine, nor I into hers."

This season however, Mr. Attwood had nearly persuaded his wife to go with their entire family to Fawndale, and a letter had come from brother John and wife heartily endorsing the plan. Aunt Beth had written—

"Be assured that an entire season here will work wonders for your pale boy. I long to see his cheeks glowing like our sturdy country boys."

With pleasant anticipation Mr. Attwood looked forward to the consummation of a long cherished plan, and pictured the pleasure of seeing his children among the trees, fishing up the mountain brook—from which he had pulled many a speckled trout, assisting at the hay making and harvest and

growing strong in Nature's garden.

Alas! a select and fashionable party—of which were a number of young people—were going to a popular mountain hotel, and Mrs. Attwood with her young people was desired to make up the party.

A summer at Fawndale was not to be thought of for one moment now. She fully determined that her two oldest children should not be obliged to bloom in the desert of an old farm house, when their accomplishments could be furthered by mingling with a fashionable set.

The two younger ones were anxious to go to the farm, and it did not really matter if they went, but as for her, the mountain air was what she needed, the altitude being much greater than that at Fawndale, and she wrote a nicely worded letter to Sister Beth thanking them for their kind invitation and accepting it in part.

The twins would be delighted to spend the summer with their country relatives and she felt as if they would be as carefully watched over as though she were with them—she had decided that the location best suited to her health was a higher altitude so she would go to a mountain resort she

then had in view, accompanied by Amy and Alfred; their father who was to take a vacation later, would divide his time between the two places.

So the matter was finally settled just as Mrs. Attwood had decided it should be, and her husband *tried* to be suited. He had gained one point surely, in getting Chadsworth and Jessie interested in going to the country.

A week later, William Attwood and his two youngest children stepped off the train at the little station of Fawndale. He was warmly greeted by his brother John.

A misty look shone in the eyes of the two brothers as they grasped each other's hand. The lawyer and the farmer—each bore in look and manner the insignia of his vocation, and each had stamped upon his face the mark of noble manhood.

Uncle John gave Jessie a big hug, shook hands with her brother, saying as he did so—"I claim you two as our visitors, but your father is nothing of the sort, for he wrote me he would only stop over for a day, and such a stay as that only counts for a call here in the country."

"I will make my visit later, John; indeed

I am counting the days between now and my vacation. I confess to a homesick longing to wander through the dear old fields and woods as when I was a boy. Has the old place changed since I last saw it?"

"Not so much as we have, I dare say."

Oh that delightful drive over the country roads from the station! Jessie wondered if there ever was a prettier route.

"Are you tired Chad?"—and Jessie looked anxiously into the pale face beside her.

"Oh no, not at all. Is not this just grand?"

"Perfectly so! Do you know Chad"—and Jessie leaned towards him whispering tremulously—"I can scarcely keep back my tears.

"Father do look at that lovely valley away at our left, and those pretty farms and homes nestling among the patches of woodlands—and do look away up the valley! What is that rolling wave-like, resembling billows on the ocean?"

"That is a field of uncut grain wavering in the wind. Yes, daughter, I see all the beauties of farms, homes and woodlands and many times in my dreams I have wandered over this old home route.

"John, I sometimes think I am not following my natural vocation. Rural life holds more charms for me than the whirl and bustle of the city."

"It may hold more charms and not so much money. You have been very successful in your business Brother, and have become what I call, a wealthy man. I never expect to be that, still I am content; in our plain manner of living we don't need so much.

"My sons shall be educated for a profession if they so desire, but if they prefer the vocation of their father, I shall be more than pleased to see them settle down upon the farm of our father and grand-father instead of going out into the buffeting life found in town or city."

A sharp turn in the road brought them in full view of the broad acres and old roomy house of the Attwoods. On the wide old fashioned piazza could be seen Aunt Beth and Kittie, waiting to welcome them.

"Oh my! what a delightful old house!" said Jessie—"You have plenty of room for us haven't you Uncle?"

"Yes, both indoors and out; I am looking for more color in this youngster's face after

a few days of outdoor rambles. You seem to have plenty of color, however."

"You will find her a big tomboy, John. I can't say I wish her different, but wish Chadsworth were more like her."

"That will all come with good health which we expect he'll find in our fields and woods; plenty of tonic in our locality."

The sisterly greeting from Mrs. Attwood to her husband's brother, and the motherly embrace bestowed upon his children, demonstrated the cordiality of the welcome to Fawndale farm. The pretty city cousin was a vision of loveliness to shy little Kittie, and she was too conscious of her own timidity to give her the glad greeting she felt. She had stood greatly in awe of Jessie's proud and handsome brother when he visited them but she instantly discovered the difference between him and his sister, and her nervousness over their meeting vanished at once.

At every turn there was an added charm to the place for Jessie. Kittie and she were to share their room together. Through its open windows the sweet perfume of the late apple blossoms floated in from the orchard nearby. The view from the West

windows was especially pleasing to her. —a strip of woodland, and beyond it she could see the glimmer of a lake, the then declining sun giving it the appearance of a sheet of molten gold.

“What golden waters are those Cousin?”

“That is Fawn Lake. It was named by the Indians many, many years ago. The deer used to come there to drink, and in the forest that then surrounded it, they hid their young fawns. I suppose that is what gave the lake its name; it is not golden but once a day as the sun strikes it when nearly ready to go behind that big mountain.

“Next month we will find such beautiful lilies there. Harry and Will each have a boat rocking there among the willows, and we have lots of fun fishing, but at this time of the year we go up the mountain brook for speckled trout.”

“Oh Kittie! I could almost wish to stay here forever; your home is so beautiful!”

“But Father says your home is magnificent, and I thought maybe this place would seem so plain and very common to you.”

“Plain and common, indeed it could never be that to me. It is grandeur and beauty. I think I inherit some of Father's

love for rural life, or what I imagine rural life is like."

"Jessie don't you think Fawn Lake is prettier for not being golden all of the time?"

"By way of a contrast do you mean?"

"Yes,—you see it is not the same color day in and day out, and I love to see the changing tints. Some days it would reflect the blue of the sky, and often it takes on a deeper shade—then it is very pretty too."

"Oh cousin Kittie!"—and Jessie's eyes danced roguishly—"Our folks ought to be exceedingly fond of me, and see lots of beauty in me every day."

Kittie's inquiring look was a sufficient "why?" and Jessie answered—

Because I vary in my color somewhat, and give them a variety of moods. I don't see why all the fire of our family should have been centered in my makeup; but don't be fearful of me here in this calm haven Kittie; there will be one thing in my favor, Alf will not be here to tease me. Dear old Alf! I love him in spite of his teasings, and I feel sure he will miss me this summer, and I don't care if he does, it will pay him

off for going to the mountains instead of coming here."

At supper, Harry, Will and Fred came in for greetings—handsome sturdy looking fellows they were too, but Jessie did not see any "blushing up to the tops of their heads," and she longed for the opportunity to give Alf's ears a tweak for saying that hateful thing—how she would enjoy seeing such a glow on Chadsworth's cheeks as they had. Poor boy! he was sadly tired and needed the coming night's rest.

"Norah, this is cousin Jessie," said Kittie, as after supper the two cousins came strolling along the walk that led to the kitchen door, which was bordered on either side with marigolds and ragged-robins.

"And a purty little lady she is too for sure; naythur prim or starched up at all, at all."

Norah had such a scorn for Alfred's "starchiness" as she termed it, and her scoldings over it after his departure had caused no little amusement among his cousins.

If she had been looking for a repetition of it in the new comers, she was disappointed; whether agreeably or otherwise, it was not easy to tell, for Norah enjoyed scolding occasionally, and the boys used to say that it

was a pity for her to be out of material to scold about, so long as she relished the fun. Norah's scoldings were however of the harmless variety—a sort of an accompaniment to her work, and as she had a relish for both, they went well together.

CHAPTER III.

Before retiring for the night, John Attwood took the well worn Bible from the table and reaching it to his brother said—"Please read our Mother's favorite Psalm, William."

How well they each knew which one that was—and William turned to it; with a voice tremulous with emotion from suddenly awakened memories, he read—"The Lord is my shepherd."

The evening hymn was sung, and then Uncle John in a few fervent words, thanked the loving Father for this reunion under the old home roof, and committed them all to the Divine care and keeping.

With deep emotions William Attwood arose at the close of the evening's devotions and passed out into the moonlight. As he strolled through the shadows athwart the path to the old front gate, memory threw a flood of recollections over him. He recalled those boyish years when with Father and Mother, he had knelt at the evening's devotions—how he had gone out from the

shadows of the old home tree, with the full purpose of establishing in his own home, when he should have attained one, the family Altar.

The home he had established was bright with love of wife and children, and beautiful with luxurious surroundings, but he shuddered this summer evening when he reflected how utterly alone he was walking life's roadway, even though his beloved wife and children were journeying with him. He had been trying to persuade himself that they were sufficiently devout as they occupied a costly pew in a fashionable church, and didn't think of being so unfashionably heathenish as to fail of being there every Sabbath if possible. Much of this was due to his haughty handsome wife of whom he was very proud, but tonight how empty seemed all those fashionable forms—how far away he had drifted—what a short space of time had intervened since he sat at his Mother's feet by the old hearthstone, but what a long distance on life's road, he had traveled away from it.—Hood's lines came to him as he leaned upon the old front gate, and he murmured—

"'But now 'tis little joy
To know I'm farther off from Heaven
Than when I was a boy.'"

The voices of his children fell upon his ears, as Jessie and Chadsworth came running down the path.

"We've come to bid you good night"—said Jessie poking her head up under the arm that was over the gate.

"Loath to leave the picture the moonlight is making Father?"—said Chadsworth stepping around to the other arm.

Placing an arm around each, their father drew them closely to him and said—

"I am reviewing my past life, the days I spent here as a boy with my Father and Mother, and my dear children, how glad I would be if this summer passed here under the old home roof, should bring to you the rich gift my dear Father and Mother possessed.

"At your birth I gave you their names, the loved names of my Father and Mother, and may God give you the Christian graces He gave them, and teach you to walk with Him, as they walked. Good night, and may God keep you my dear ones."

The twins walked slowly back to the house, Chadsworth saying as they stepped upon the piazza—

“Jessie, I wonder if Father thinks we are not Christians.”

“Of course he don’t think so, and I’m sure I would resent such an idea very quick.” Still as she laid her head upon her pillow that night she asked herself, “am I really a Christian?” and felt vexed at herself the next instant for allowing the thought to intrude—“The next thing I’ll be wondering whether or not I am a heathen—I do know I am awfully sleepy.”

The following morning the two girls began to plan for the coming days; but where were they to begin? Jessie told Kittie confidentially that she wanted Chadsworth to take in every one of their tramps, “for,” said she, “if we don’t insist upon it he’ll mope around with a book in his hand, and won’t improve a particle.”

“Suppose then, we all go fishing tomorrow up the brook through the woods. We will carry our lunch and take our own time for the trip.”

“Oh that will be jolly!” said Jessie gaily

swinging her hat above her head—"but what are we to fish with?"

"Poles, hooks and lines, of course."

"Yes, I know, but I mean what kind of bait?"

"Earth worms, Fred will dig them for us."

And Chad shall help him. At what time will we start out?"

"Not before nine, for I must help do the morning's work."

"*Must* you help every morning, Kittie?"

"Mother wishes me to do so. She says it is beneficial for every one to have some work to do every day. She says too, that if she does her duty, she will teach me the *how* of good housekeeping, and Jessie, I *do* want to be just what Mother is."

"If you are, you will be a dear good lovely woman, Kittie—but why mayn't I work with you? I could soon learn so as to help you, and I don't care to be droning around while every one is so busy; just imagine how foolish I would feel."

"If you really wish it Jessie, I think Mother will not care."

"I do wish it; every one here seems so

well and happy—I believe your work has lots to do with it.”

“Mother says ‘busy hands make cheerful hearts.’ ”

“She seems to have both certainly.”

Jessie was very impulsive and always in for variety; here was a change certainly—one she enjoyed, but full of blunders over which the two girls had many a hearty laugh.

Aunt Beth was a competent teacher, and she found in Jessie an apt pupil. God shapes our destinies and in unforeseen ways our opportunities are made for us—happy are we if we seize upon them. Mrs. Attwood was a devout Christian and was being led in all her ways by the holy spirit. Christ came into her life, in her every day home duties.

Now here was Jessie's opportunity, unseen by her at the time. The mornings which followed while being taught the many little things that go to make up the whole of housekeeping, thrown in constant companionship with one of Christs' faithful and loving followers, precious seed was sown, blessed by God, watered and nourished by the Holy Spirit, it came forth and

developed and later on showed forth to His glory.

The following morning William Attwood left Fawndale farm for an early train to the city. "Don't get homesick children" he said as he kissed them goodbye. "Alfred and Amy thought you would be quite ready to return with me."

"What a grand mistake," said Chadsworth.

Jessie retorted with — "Give them our love, and tell them please, that homesickness is a commodity not to be gotten in this locality. Alf would give most any thing to be one of our fishing party today, I know."

At nine o'clock the girls were ready with fish lines and lunch basket, waiting for the boys and bait boxes. They soon saw Fred coming and Jessie called—"where's Chad?"

"I don't know. I haven't seen him since you have."

"Oh, the old bookworm!" said his sister, and she darted around to the front yard, beckoning Kittie to follow. Seated under an old elm, with his back towards them, was Chadsworth so engaged with the book he was reading that he did not hear the

girls, and no doubt would not have heard a dozen, had there been so many there. His sister took her handkerchief from her pocket and slipping quietly up passed it quickly around over his eyes.

"Here Kittie quick! get the book."

"Hold on a minute, Jet," said he laughing and struggling to get away from the two girls, "don't soil the book please, it is Aunt Beth's 'Thaddeus Of Warsaw.'"

"If you want to receive your sight you must promise to let 'Thaddeus' alone until there comes a rainy day."

"Let me see the barometer first, won't you?"

"No, I will not. I tell you Chad, we have lots of work to do, and can't idle around with a book all the morning. You were to have helped dig the bait, and didn't you dodge out of it slick though?—come promise, for it is time we were off.

"I promise, and because I forgot about the bait, I will carry the lunch basket."

"That's fair, boys and girls," said Jessie pocketing the handkerchief.

So the jolly little fishing party started out, rambled through the woods, ate their dinner long before noon because they

worked up famishing appetites wriggling through the brush, clambering over logs, and sliding down mossy banks. They returned home looking tired, but triumphantly swinging a small string of still smaller trout.

"Shure," said Norah as the fish landed in the kitchen, "'twould have been bether to have lift the little innocint speckled craythurs a swimmin' 'till they had grown the lingth o'one mouthful, the ontire lot o'thim."

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CHAPTER IV.

The close of the first week at Uncle John's came only too soon for Jessie. She was aware that the Sabbath would be kept sacred here in this home where they daily walked with God. She dreaded the thought of being obliged to put in one quiet day; she noted the preparations going on for the rest from the labors of the week, and plans for church services—as Aunt Beth told her, “for the worship of Him who had abundantly blessed their labors, and kindly cared for them.”

Aunt Beth, Kittie and Norah were as busy as bees and went forward with their preparations for tomorrow's dinner in a joyful manner, and when supper was ready the Sunday's roast and pudding were also.

The sun had gone down behind the mountain, and Jessie with her brother strolled down to the duck pond, and amused themselves by watching the gathering in of a family of young ducks whose mother seemed to think her youngsters tardy in getting ready for the night, and was running

here and there in a hysterical manner, urging them to greater haste.

"Oh, dear!" said Jessie laughing "I think Aunt Beth ought to be here. She could marshal this little army and gather them in with half this fuss. What a famous general she would make though."

"Yes, but she wouldn't give her army an opportunity to smell a battle; she would arrange things so diplomatically, that guns and gunpowder would be entirely left out."

"This place is a regular jolly, but Chad, I expect tomorrow will be a dreadful offset to all previous days. Just to think of it, our ears will not be gladdened by the sound of *one* church bell even. I'm expecting to die several times over, when I think of the solemn stillness of the approaching Sabbath. I've been puzzling my brain all day to find some way of living through it, but as yet, no plan has presented itself."

"I'm sure we'll enjoy that lovely drive to the church, which is two miles away."

"Yes, that is the *one* green spot in the dry desert of tomorrow."

"Then when we get home and have eaten that dinner that seems to be about ready this blessed minute, I am going with my

book out to that nice flat rock beyond the barn, and have a nice long time reading."

"Who is *homesick* tonight, Jessie?"

"Not I, Chad Attwood," said Jessie hotly "and if you write such a mean thing to Alf, you will be sorry, let me tell you."

"He said you'd be homesick inside of a week; don't you remember?"

"Yes, and I said I would *not* which *you* will please remember."

"For my part Jessie, I'm quite anxious to see what the services in a country church are like. I suppose Father sat there many a time when a boy, for the building is a very old one, Will says."

"Won't it seem strange Chad to fancy Father as a little boy sitting there?"

Every one was astir early next morning. Aunt Beth went about the work softly singing a sacred melody, while Kittie occasionally joined in with her sweet contralto.

Jessie helped in the drying of the dishes, and laid the table for dinner, as Norah had already set out for her own church, a good distance away, and as usual would spend the day with her people. Fred and Chads-worth took the cows to the pasture.

The early morning passed off quickly

enough, and they were soon on their way to church. The ride was a very enjoyable one. Over a hill upon whose apex they could look down upon two valleys.—through each flowed a noisy little creek and near a roadway bridge they joined their forces, dashed around a curve and were lost to sight in a belt of dense wood. Through these woods our party drove. The ferns waved gracefully from their mossy beds, and the balsamic odors of the pines and hemlocks perfumed the air.—The dogwood with its magnolia like blossoms swayed back and forth among the tall birches. The shady coolness, and the sweet Sabbath stillness, all touched the poetic soul of Jessie Attwood, and she murmured "how beautiful!"

"God's handiwork," said Uncle John. "Nothing wrought by man, can compare with His, and all for us. The manifestations of His love all around us, and His presence with us if we choose to accept Him."

"Uncle John, don't you think it is perfectly natural for us to see all these things with love and admiration for them with-

out thinking how, or by whom they are bestowed?"

"Yes, for we are by nature ungrateful, and more so towards the Divine Giver than to an earthly one, but if you were to bestow a small gift even, upon a friend, and he should be delighted with it, and think it was indispensable to his happiness, yet never once think of you as the giver of it, wouldn't you feel ill-treated?"

"Yes, indeed, I would, and is it in that manner I am treating the Great Giver of all?"

"My dear girl, let your own heart answer that question," said Uncle John pleasantly.

Jessie reached out and pulled off one of the graceful tassels from a water birch that leaned over the roadway, and said nothing.

On the outskirts of the village a little back from the road and shaded by tall pines and maples, stood the church, with its modest little spire glistening in the sunshine. Quite a number had already gathered—several vehicles were standing there, with their horses tied to the posts set around at the sides of the church green for that purposes.

The interior of the church is indeed

plain—the rows of little pews without cushions or footstools—the aisles are uncarpeted, the pulpit unpretentious with no carvings whatever to relieve its outlines. The young minister sat in the pulpit, his head bowed in silent prayer.

A sweet perfume stole in from an open window back of the pulpit, for a sweet briar growing there, swayed back and forth, peeped in upon the assembly then withdrew as the passing breezes swept on, but left the breath of its roses stealing through the room. The windows were not numerous or pretty, but with old fashioned panes with no tints or colorings to subdue the glaring sunlight, the tall maples shaded them now, but Jessie wondered how the good people managed when the trees were leafless, and thought they must need their sun umbrellas in winter. The thought brought a smile to her mischievous looking face which the young man in the pulpit no doubt found difficult to interpret, as his glance just then was upon her.

With voices attuned to praise the congregation sang with the spirit, and having taken the open hymn book Harry handed her, Jessie's voice sang out with the rest before

she was hardly aware of it, and she felt somehow as if she was a partaker of the blessed worship though she did not then stop to analyze her feelings.

After reading the 17th chapter of John, the minister chose the 15th verse, "I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from the evil."

Some one has said that our thoughts are like a kaleidoscope—the colors are all there, but when turned in our hands they adjust themselves differently each time. Jessie may have listened to the same topic many times before, but certainly not in the same mood to receive it. At first she listened in an indifferent manner, and kept glancing at the roses on the sweet briar that nodded to her—then she counted the panes in the windows before her and noted that the upper sash contained one more row of panes than the lower one; then directly in front of her sat a little girl with pale blue ribbons on her hat, and a vivid green one on her hair, and she wondered why the two colors *must* look so ugly together when either one was—"If we abide in Jesus our joy shall be full," came from the pulpit. "How wonderfully

God's works are planned—He loved the world—how beautiful He has made it. He desires that we should love it, and admire the beauties of His handiwork, to worship the builder, the great artist who paints all these landscapes in living colors; the musician who sings through the swaying boughs and running waters; the designer who planned the hills and the valleys and crowns the mountains with so many different shades of verdure. Surrounding us with all these beauties and innumerable blessings He then invites us to a personal companionship with Him."

Jessie's eyes were fastened upon the speaker, and she felt as if the words were, in an especial manner, directed to her when he looked into the upturned face and said—

"Jesus has shown His love for us, and desires to walk with us, and also desires that we may have that loveliness of spirit that will show forth His presence in us that the Father might be glorified."

At the close of the service, the congregation gathered in the aisles and upon the outer steps, and exchanged hand shakes, suggestions on the weather present and future, and also upon the coming crops, with

bits of opinion concerning the sermon thrown in. The minister being a supply for an absent pastor it *seemed* quite essential that a few of the older members should notice that "he didn't dwell on regeneration as much as he ought, and never touched on sanctification."

"Well," said Uncle John, as they drove homeward, "how did our city people enjoy a country church service?"

"I can truly say I enjoyed it," said Chads-worth—"the sweet simplicity of the surroundings seemed to turn my thoughts toward the speaker, and I think I took in more of the sermon than I usually do at our home services."

Jessie's eyes were following the patches of moss and ferns they were then passing as they slowly toiled up the long hill.

"Once when I glanced at Jessie," said Fred, she looked as if she wanted to laugh outright, and I didn't wonder at it, for there ahead of us sat Steve Orson with his old lop brimmed hat on his head with not enough sense to remove it, and every move he made the hat would flip, flap, as if it was in a gale; he looked comical enough, didn't he Jessie?"

"Really Fred, I didn't notice him; if I had I'm not sure I shouldn't have laughed, for he must have looked funny. The roses at the pulpit windows—did you notice them? They kept peeping and then withdrawing, and they nodded to me either when they came or when they went, and possibly I smiled at them, for I thought them very pretty—Oh, I did enjoy the entire service, Uncle John! and I'm truly sorry that I lost a single sentence of the sermon. It was just the place for such a subject, with all the surroundings—nature's not man's work.

"If I had heard the same words in our church at home, I think they would not have impressed me as they did here, and I wonder if the minister could have had the inspiration surrounded with lofty domes and spires, as here, in sight of the woodlands and the everlasting hills."

"Jessie" said Aunt Beth, "you are a true lover of nature, but my dear, while we should love all these beautiful things placed here by a loving Father, we should love the Maker of them more. "The sea is His, for He made it, and the dry land—the strength of the hills is His also.'"

After dinner, Jessie took a book and strolled down to the orchard—with her thoughts upon the morning's sermon she wished to be alone. She lay upon the grass and watched the robins in the boughs over her head. The summer winds swayed the branches, and she looked up through them into the far heavens; the rich smoothly rolling clouds seemed like her thoughts—now moving quietly, slowly then again singing and tumbling in a headlong fashion, and all apparently purposeless. The earth and sky seemed in harmony and attuned to one song of—

“Glory To God In the Highest.”

“This is a perfect day,” said Jessie “Oh, this beautiful world!” Hawthorn's musings in the garden at the “Old Manse” when he says the beautiful things in nature are the promises of a blessed Eternity, flitted through her brain and she said to herself—“surely He would not have given us the hearts to enjoy these lovely days He has made, unless we were meant to live on forever and ever. It surely shows us glimpses far inward through the gates of Paradise.” She buried her face among the clovers and an earnest heart cry went up.

"Oh blessed Jesus! make me to love Thee, and oh! let me clasp Thy hand, for I do see it in all these beautiful surroundings—oh Jesus lead me—make me a Christian; indeed Thou art here—I feel Thy presence—let me stand close beside Thee—let me live with Thee."

Sweet peaceful thoughts came like the then smoothly rolling clouds, and through them, it seemed to her, the words she had heard that morning in the quaint little church floated to her ears. "I pray Thee not to take them out of the world"—God had created in her a love for His handiwork and, as the minister had said, He wished us to love this life, and perfectly live it, and in that way we would be fully fitted for that eternal existence.

How sweet ought to be the service to such a giver—and Jessie Attwood lying there with her glowing face pressed close among the clovers, with her heart full of praise to Jesus earnestly desired to be one of His children.

Such a Sabbath had never come to her life before—how sweetly and peacefully it had passed. The drowsy hum of the bees in the blossoms around her lulled her to

sleep, and the shadows of the old apple trees lengthened—the birds began to gather among the boughs—the chirpings of the evening insects commenced and the bees flew homeward.

She was aroused by the “ka-lang, ka-lingle” of the cow bells and she knew they were getting home the herd for the evening milking.

Fred and Chadsworth sauntering along behind the cows, spied Jessie looking a little bewildered as if not fully comprehending the situation.

“Hello! if there isn’t Jessie,” said Fred.

“Looks like Rip Van Winkle,” said Chadsworth.

“More like ‘Dame Dimple’” said his cousin, and Fred sang

“‘Crickets that chirped in the grass at
her feet,
Grasshoppers, pebbles, and clover so
sweet.’”

“Boys is it really so late as to be milking time?”

“Certainly” said her brother, “‘Time and tide wait for no man.’”

"But I think they ought to wait for a girl like me."

"We will Cousin; so gather up your book and hat and I'll help you over the wall. Do you know Kittie rummaged the whole house for you and may be hunting still—she wanted you to go with us after the cows—now if you go along with us through the lane, she will think we have played a trick on her."

"I only thought to be gone a little while when I left the house, but I will explain all to Kittie. This day has been *so* short, but I have lived a long space of life this afternoon, really."

"How aged she looks" said her brother—"do you know Fred, she has been worrying all the past week how she was going to live through this day."

Fred looked "why" though he didn't say it.

"Well I have lived through it so far, and it has been a very happy one too."

"Even though you didn't hear a single church bell?"

"This has been the sweetest Sabbath I ever knew"—and Jessie's eyes filled with

happy tears, and a sweet peace flooded her soul.

“Peace I leave with you—My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth give I unto you.—”

CHAPTER V.

How happily those summer days went by. Sometimes they tramped through the woods for flowers or specimens of moss—gathered needles of the fir pines for balm pillows, and later sought out the rare bright cardinal flowers, glowing flame like on the banks of the streams—then they rowed over the lake and brought armsfull of the creamy lilies. They were happy youngsters truly—as free from care as so many gypsies, and nearly as brown too—thanks to these healthful rambles, Chadworth's cheeks had nearly lost their pallor, and his increasing appetite was a source of pleasant comment at the table—Uncle John declaring that he should be obliged to order the miller to grind out more flour for him.

“Aunt Beth, this is indeed a life worth living here in this delightful farm house,” said Jessie one day as she was taking lessons in bread making.

“Father would enjoy seeing me now, but I *do* wonder what Mamma and Amy would say.”

"Faith," said Norah "Oime afther thinkin' they wud say it wos the purtiest pictur' they'd seen for mony a day, wid the dimples in yea plump arrums bared for the wurkin', and the swate face on yez a bendin' over the tray—"

"And some flour on my nose, Norah."

"Yis darlint, but not to be compared wid the flower on yar purtye cheeks."

"Oh Norah! what a mixture of poetry, paste and palaver, we are having this mornin'"—and Jessie laughed merrily—Auntie I have not written to our folks that I am engaged in lessons on practical housekeeping, but I shall today when I write to Alf. I want to tell him of Marjorie Kent. Aunt Beth I think she has the loveliest face I ever saw. Alf thinks himself a judge of beauty; he would call Marjorie superb, I know."

"Her face is not more charming than her nature"—said Aunt Beth. "Now dear, as you have the loaf well kneaded, put it into the large pan, and if you expect to make it into the small loaves, you must forego your trip to the woods this forenoon, for it must rise again before putting it into the bake pans."

"Well, I intend to see this all the way through, and we can make up for staying at home this morning by riding on the loads of hay this afternoon, the boys said we might."

"Another shocking thing to write to Alfred," laughed Aunt Beth.

A week later Jessie received a letter from Alfred; a portion of it ran thus—

"We are all sorry you are not with us, Jet, Amy says you are missing more than something you have any idea of. The toilettes of some of the ladies here are superb. We are a gay party, and I imagine you would find it more to your *natural* taste to be dressed in a tennis suit and having a game with us, than riding on a load of hay in your old dresses. Your summer's acquisition of housework, freckles, etc., will be quite a supplement to your charms, but *don't* for heaven's sake Jet, make any rustic acquaintances. It is all very well among our relatives, who of course are fine people, but we need not go any farther than that. Miss Kent may be pretty to some, but no rustic beauty for *me* I assure you.—"

Away went Alfred's letter, the sheets fly-

ing in all directions, and away went Jessie's temper also.

"Oh the mean old hatefulness!" and the hot tears of anger dropped on the flushed cheeks. "Oh if I don't make Alf Attwood sorry for writing such mean hateful things, I'll wonder"—Kittie looked up from the basket of peas she was shelling, too surprised over Jessie's outburst of temper, to say anything.

"Don't look so amazed at me Kittie," and Jessie, deeply mortified at the display she had made, hastened to explain as best she could without giving Alfred's exact words.

"You see Kittie I do get awfully vexed at Alf while at home, for telling me so frequently that I have no style about me, and am so unlike Mamma and Amy, of which I am perfectly aware, but now he must hit on the old strain in his letter because he can't speak his piece to me directly. It is no rare thing for my temper to rise at home—it is up often and a quarrel is sure to come off between Alf and me, but Chad and I never quarrel—he's too lazy for that. I am really on my best behavior this summer; and to show you that I am really sorry for my anger I will gather up Alf's letter and

finish reading it when I can behave better," which she proceeded to do and laughingly said "the storm is over now and we anchor by and by", and if you are not afraid I'll bite, I would like to sit beside you and help shell the peas."

Kittie smiling, made room for her on the rustic settee and the two girls were soon laughing and chatting; although she still keenly resented Alfred's unkind words as reflecting upon her relatives whom she had grown to love dearly. Jessie felt the deepest regret over her unrighteous anger, and in spite of her gay chatter with Kittie she experienced heart throbs of pain, and not long after was opening her heart to dear Aunt Beth, who wisely directed the penitent one to Him whom she had sinned against, and Jessie emerged from the secret confessional, stronger and more reliant upon the All wise Counsellor than heretofore.

If the country exploits did not add to Jessie's charms as observed through Alfred's eyes, her brother was receiving great benefits from them—he was fast losing that look which had spoken so much listlessness and unconcern—the glow on his cheeks and the happy light in his eyes, showed good

health and spirits with "an intense relish for joyous existence."

A long jaunt to the mountains for berries, was one of the delightful exploits in which the greater portion of the neighborhood took part. The farm wagons with loads of happy youngsters, pails, baskets and eatables, drove out of Fawndale at an early hour

Jessie said the only space there would be for berries would be the one the dinner left, and Chad would willingly help clear that.

When the base of the mountain was reached, all got out and began the climb on foot—from overhanging branches of wayside trees, and over low shrubs, clambered the Alleghany Vine, in greatest profusion, with its delicate foliage and lavender colored flowers. As it was not possible to rob the woods of them, each one helped himself and when the summit was gained, it was a gorgeous looking and gaily bedecked party that clambered into the wagons.

To Jessie and Chadsworth, it was like a glimpse of Wonderland, to see a large space of ground literally covered with the

pretty blue berries. Anxious to prove that city people knew how to pick berries, they set to work with all speed to fill their baskets. How hot the sun shone out! Jessie was conscious that her broad brimmed hat did not prevent the sun from hitting her face and neck, but she said—

“Alf and Amy will not see me, thank goodness, before I get it all off.”

“You should have brought a sun-bonnet to wear while picking berries”—said Harry.

“Harry that sounds so much like Alf it assures me you are related to him.”

“Because I am related to you, I don’t like to see your face baked, and the end of your nose burned off.”

“Mother will smear it with cold cream, and it will be as good as new tomorrow—” said Kittie.

Did ever a dinner taste better than the one they ate that day?—the coffee was made in tin pails and suspended over the blazing faggots, and served in tin cups, while the eggs were roasted in the hot embers. The cloths were spread upon the ground, and they sat around them like veritable gypsies and did full justice to the

spread. Evidently the ones who prepared the lunch knew what a mountain appetite was like; if they had not fully known, no fragments could have been gathered up.

Sun umbrellas and two scraggy oaks made a fine shade for them during the after dinner hour as they lounged about and told stories, propounded conundrums, and passed little jokes about. Jessie noted that Harry's glances were often cast towards Marjorie Kent who did look lovely indeed. Her broad sun hat was pushed back from her forehead where her soft dark hair clustered in little lustrous waves and curls—the long dark lashes shaded eyes of deepest blue, and the glow on her cheeks was like the delicate pink of the wild roses.

"I wonder" thought Jessie, "if she knows how really beautiful she looks. I can see that Harry thinks her the prettiest girl here. Oh I wonder if I haven't discovered a secret. Well it is a good one, and I am so glad." Then Jessie's fertile brain began weaving a little romance in which Marjorie Kent figured as her cousin. She had arrived at the place where Marjorie and Harry were living in a pretty little farm home—a sweet little home, just such a one

as she fancied Marjorie would grace—and she, Jessie, had come to spend a summer's vacation with them, when Harry changed the onward current of her thoughts by saying—

“What do you suppose Jet is thinking about?—her face is beaming like the harvest moon, and her smile doesn't look as if she had contracted a dose of dyspepsia from eating those hard roasted eggs.”

Jessie's face just then glowed more like the sun than the moon, but she laughed merrily and said—

“A chromo to the one who can guess of what I was thinking, and half the berries I have picked to the one who comes nearest to it.”

“Sealed or open guesses?” asked Will.

“Open, of course; that is the fun of it.”

Then a number of amusing guesses were made; Uncle John entering into the contest as jovial as any of them. Harry asked if they might not have the *location* of her thoughts.

“Yes, I was thinking of this place, and also of Fawndale; a sort of prophecy.”

“For how long a time ahead,” said he.

“Oh, perhaps three years from now—per-

haps four or five, and to further help you, just imagine me a mind reader or a good physiognomist—" and giving Harry a mischievous glance, she said, "I was looking at you; now I have given you a good start Harry, so go ahead, *you* surely ought to be able to win one of the prizes."

"Which way was Harry looking?" asked Fred.

"Foul ball, and off his base," Harry said quickly, rightly surmising that his keen eyed cousin had guessed the sweet secret he had scarcely allowed himself to acknowledge.

"I am in for picking more berries, so will give up my chances for the first or second prizes to the rest of you," and Harry swung his empty basket around his head and started off.

"So say we all of us," said Jessie, and they scattered about, and began working like so many bees.

The sun was out of sight, and a whip-poorwill was loudly singing near the kitchen door when the huckleberry party returned home.

"Aunt Beth" said Jessie, as she stood before her with a face as red as a lobster,—

"this has been the jolliest day I ever knew, even if I am almost tired to death."

"I could keep track of my youngsters all day" said Uncle John, "whenever I lost sight of them, Jessie's laugh now and then, told me just where they were."

"Oh Uncle John! does that signify that I was the noisiest one?"

"Perhaps not the noisiest, but the happiest," said Aunt Beth, "but how you have burned your face dear, and Kittie, too."

"I can endure it very well Auntie, as Alfred and Amy are not here to chaff me about it. How dreadful it would look to them wouldn't it though?"

"You have a letter from them I think. It came this afternoon. Can you wait until after your supper before reading it?"

"Easy enough. I am desirous of hearing from them, and *filled* with a desire to eat. How good our dinner was! You must know very well what a mountain appetite is, for you put up a generous supply."

"And we disposed of it, too" said Chads-worth.

After supper, the brother and sister began reading the letter when Jessie called out—"What do you think of this? Amy and

Alfred will be here tomorrow—it looks as if they were coming on the fly—they will be here to return with Chad and me.”

“I am indeed glad to hear it,” said her Aunt,—“but is not your mother coming too?”

Not at present, she will come on later when Father does. You see a fever has broken out in the hotel, Amy and Alf fly off here, and Mamma goes home sick—not with the fever however, but simply worn out, Amy says—she writes too, that only the young people have the fever as yet.”

“Cousin, be sure and get some cream on your sunburns tonight,” laughed Will.

“Oh I shall be so glad to see the dear old bothers, that I will not mind the sunburns, and they ought to feel the same concerning me.”

The next day after dinner Harry, accompanied by Jessie and Chadsworth, started out for the station to meet Alfred and Amy. A threatening look of rain induced Aunt Beth to send along gossamers and umbrellas.

“Harry, said Jessie in her most persuasive tones, “won’t you let me drive coming home?”

"Certainly Jessie, you may now if you wish; here are the ribbons."

"Oh I care more especially to drive on the home trip. You see I want to show off to Alf, for he knows just simply nothing about handling the lines."

"Neither do you," said her brother.

"Yes I do, lots, and Alf need not know, but that I have all the art."

"You shall drive, certainly cousin, and I will stand ready to recommend you, even though you did try to get a drive off on me while taking our dinner on the mountain yesterday. How do you expect me to get over that, you bad girl?"

Jessie's answer was a ringing laugh, so loud, that some very staid cows which were grazing near by in a wayside meadow, raised their heads, gave them a startled look from out their great dreamy eyes, then scampered off to a safe distance, whirled and faced them again.

"Oh, Harry! I think it was ever so generous of you not to claim either the Chromo, or half of my berries, but aren't you cute at guessing though?"

"Much better than you are."

"What was it, anyway?" asked Chads-worth.

"Jessie was thinking that Marjorie Kent was pretty."

"Oh well, if that was it, then we are all entitled to the chromo, for no one thinks differently of Miss Kent."

"Harry," Jessie hesitated, and a flush suffused the round pretty face that was turned towards him, and the bright eyes glowed through moisture.

"Well, Jessie?"

"I am *so* glad that Marjorie is a Christian."

Harry balanced the carriage whip upon two of his fingers, and said nothing. Jessie continued—

"Aunt Beth says Marjorie is such a true Christian, and since I have been trying to live the life of one, I feel so anxious that all my friends should be with me in that respect.

"Cousin, I am glad also that Marjorie is a Christian—I'm glad that you are too, but I confess that I don't have the interest in such matters that Father and Mother have.

I ought to, I suppose, but somehow it don't come to me."

"Can't you see Harry, that it comes to you, just the same as it does to any one only you do not receive it? Oh! I am so much happier since this new love has entered into my being. Yesterday as we stood on that high eminence and I looked down upon the grain fields in those far away valleys looking like mosaic work, everything within reach of my vision looked more grand and beautiful to me than it would have done a few months ago, for I saw God in it all, and it was such a pleasure to me to feel that the God over all and the Maker of all, was my God too. I have been so happy here this summer, and I started out in the way of true happiness the first Sabbath I passed here, and I wish I could express to you and Chad the joy that has come to me in receiving Jesus as my personal friend and constant companion."

"What a little preacher you are Cousin."

"Alf and Amy will cut your sermons short off, if you go to work upon them," said her brother.

"Oh I never meant you should think me

sermonizing, indeed I did not. I was only trying to tell you what was in my heart"—and the tears sprang into her eyes. How could one so faulty as I am, teach others?"

"Forgive me cousin; I wouldn't for a moment even have you think I wished to grieve you. You *can* teach me, and you have this afternoon shown me that I have all my lifetime, had extended to me this gift that you have received and has made you so happy. You accepted it, and I passed it by. I see now as I never did before; your great possession might be mine also."

"Oh Harry! if it only would be!"

"Jessie" said Chadsworth, instantly regretting his unfortunate remark. "you may box my ears sometimes at your leisure; if I ever get to thinking as you do, I will be a better boy than I am now. Hurrah, there goes the train whistle! Alf and Amy are there ahead of us."

"Just a little," said Harry, "we have only about five minutes drive yet."

"How eager I am to see them," and Jessie leaned forward as if to get there sooner by so doing.

"Please Jessie, wait for Harry and me.

Just look Harry, her head is clear out of line. Hadn't we better all get there together?"

"Oh Chad! You are *never* in a flurry. I could almost wish the house to get on fire for the sake of seeing you considerably moved."

"And quickly moved, eh? There they are! I saw them first and my neck is not craned out either."

On the station platform stood Alfred and Amy radiant at the sight of their brother and sister whom they greeted rapturously.

"Isn't Chad looking fine though," said Amy. "Really I should hardly have known him—what have you been doing with him?"

"How is his nose now, Sis?" said Jessie mischievously.

"Handsome! just in good proportion to the rest of his phiz. Whatever *will* Mamma say when she sees him—and you Jessie, I do believe you have grown tall. How is it Cousin Harry, has she climbed every fence on the farm?"

"I presume so if she has kept pace with Kittie."

"Indeed, I have, and to the highest lofts in the barns too. Aunt Beth can tell you

of many cunningly hidden nests that we have discovered among the hay lofts. Fred, Chad, Kittie and I make a famous quartette I can tell you."

"Our blessed old tomboy still," said Alfred, kissing her glowing cheeks.

While seating themselves for the ride home Jessie said, "Chad, as I am the driver, you will please sit with Alf and Amy." This was said with such an air of experience in the business, that it tickled Harry immensely.

"Hello Jet" said Alfred "can you drive?"

"Like a Jehu," said Harry.

"That is down on the list of my new accomplishments Alf, and the list is quite a lengthy affair too."

"I am afraid to ride if you drive, indeed I am," remonstrated Amy, nervously.

"You are perfectly safe Cousin," said Harry. "These horses are well trained, and Jessie can drive, as you will see."

Chadsworth "ahemmed" and grinned, whereupon Jessie frowned at him. The mutterings of distant thunder and a few scattering drops of the coming shower, brought the umbrellas and gossamers into use.

"Do be sure and take in these lovely views Sister," and Jessie sat very erect, holding the reins taut, and ignoring the umbrella just yet.

"I am getting a lovely view of you just now," laughed Amy. "Jet, you never looked the tomboy to perfection, more than you do this minute, I suppose you are aware that the rain is dripping off of your hat brim."

"My last summer's hat Amy, a little rain will not harm me or my hat,—both are used to it; we were expecting this shower"—and she repeated a portion of Thomas Bailey Aldrich's poem on "The Rain" —

"We knew it would rain, for all
the more
A spirit on slender ropes of mist,
Was lowering its golden buckets
down
Into the vapory amethyst.

We knew it would rain, for the
poplars showed
The whites of their leaves, and the
amber grain

Shrunk in the wind—and the light-
ning now,
Is tangled in tremulous skeins of
rain.' ”

“Well Jessie” said Alfred “I am surprised to hear you quoting poetry, for you are the identical girl who said she hadn't the time to spare for such things. How did you bring poetry reading into your time here?”

There is time for everything at Aunt Beth's except droning around, there don't seem to be any time for that, however—no drones are allowed in Aunt Beth's bee hive. What have you brought about this summer?”

“Recreation, health, and a good time generally—I think that is the summing up of the whole.”

“Well Chad and I have had any amount of recreation, a jolly good time, and bushels of good health.”

“Your looks tell that story, Chad looks so unlike his old self, with such a glow on his face, that he could easily be taken for another fellow, were he to walk into the city home of the Attwoods this afternoon.”

A wicked little gleam shot from Jessie's eyes as she glanced back at her older brother and said—

"It might be advisable for him to appear at the kitchen door on his first arrival," the next instant she was heartily ashamed of herself and regretted the ugly little thrust, and resolved to apologize at her earliest opportunity.

With a heavy shower nearly upon them, our party reached home just before the downpour, thus escaping a thorough wetting.

All did ample justice to Aunt Beth's cream short cakes that evening with the exception of Alfred, who begged to be excused on account of a dull headache, and retired to his room for the night. Jessie felt proud of her handsome stylish looking sister, who entertained them with a description of "The Mountain Retreat," and its surrounding scenery, and of their lawn tennis grounds, a deserted field beyond a strip of woodland, and said,—

"In one corner of this field, is an old-fashioned cottage, all forsaken, and ready to tumble down with age. Near its door is a beautiful old well, ever so deep, and away down as far as one can see, the stones

all around the sides are covered with pretty mosses of darkest green, and graceful ferns are growing out of it too. The widely sung 'old oaken bucket' was not there, but one of the gentlemen of our party tied a tin pail to the chain on the old windlass, and out from those dark depths from ferns and mosses, we got such delicious cold water."

An idea presented itself just then to Aunt Beth, and she asked "did you say Amy, that none but the young people had the fever?"

"None but the young people so far, and it seems strange too."

"And were they all of the Tennis Club?"

"Let me see—yes, they were all of our club, though I had not thought of that before."

"Don't you think it probable that they took malaria from the deserted well?"

"Could it be possible?"

"Yes, I have actually known of fever germs being quaffed from an old deserted well."

"Dear me Auntie, Alfred and I may yet have the fever!" and Amy's fair cheeks paled visibly.

We will hope not, as there is no good of borrowing trouble, still I fear you have been exposed to typhus germs."

CHAPTER VI.

Chadsworth shared his room with his brother the night of his arrival, and the following morning startled the entire family by announcing that Alfred seemed very ill indeed—was moaning and talking incoherently, and he had been unable to arouse him.

"Oh the fever!" gasped Amy; "I fear it is" said Mrs. Attwood.

A physician was summoned at once, and confirmed their fears. The dreaded fever was in their midst.

"Oh Aunt Beth!" sobbed Amy, "I feel almost certain that Alfred will die, and then too, the thought that we have brought the fever here into your household is distracting to me."

"My dear child," said her aunt soothingly "try and face the situation calmly; have no fears for our taking the fever, for in this pure atmosphere we will not be affected by it, and I think too that it will be largely in Alfred's favor that no malarial taint exists here. With good care he may

soon be well. I will be his nurse at present, at least until your parents arrive."

"What! *You* Aunt Beth?"

"Yes. Don't you think I would make a good one?" smiling, "I am quite a competent nurse, I am told."

Jessie who was sitting in the window crying silently turned around and broke out with—

"Aunt Beth, is there *anything* that you can't do?"

"Yes, dear, any amount of things. In this country place it is needful to know how to do much that in a city like yours can be hired done by others. We will get some one to help Norah, and I will devote my entire time to Alfred, with earnest prayers and trust in the Divine helper, I feel that he will soon be restored."

"Dear good Aunt Beth!" said Jessie throwing her arms about her aunt's neck, "you make me feel as if he surely would get well, but do you know, I'm going to help Norah? There are so many things you have taught me to do this summer, and now you will see I can be of some use."

"I am sure you can dear, and as Norah is so fond of you, she will readily find some-

thing for you to do, and will I know, prefer you to a new and strange helper, and I may not be needed long by Alfred."

Alfred's sickness and the attendant circumstances, gave Amy food for reflection. Her brother lay in an unconscious state, and often delirious, and his constant attendant was their Aunt. Jessie cheerful, and busy, helping Norah and Kittie. Chadsworth, making himself useful in various ways, while she, to use her own words "was of no use whatever."

When the Death Angel's shadow hovers over our loved ones, how closely we study the expressions on the faces of the experienced watchers, and we cling closer to the friends who share our anxieties. Amy with a dreadful heart sinking, saw the anxious expression on her Aunt's countenance and while studying carefully every changing look fancied she saw there no hope for the patient so lovingly tended, so when told by Aunt Beth that the crisis was safely passed and the physician said with good care he would recover, the tension of her anxiety held her no longer and she sank into a deathlike swoon.

Mr. and Mrs. Attwood arrived that day,

and were met at the station with the glad news that Alfred was better.

"Oh Mamma!" said Amy "Alfred's improved condition is all due to the care he has received from Aunt Beth. The doctor himself told me so. I feel like going down on my knees to her, and I cannot begin to tell how utterly worthless I feel since coming here. Of what use am I, living my life as I have been? See Aunt Beth—what a truly noble life she is living! she is a blessing to every one with whom she comes in contact—and Jessie too, our tomboy you would be surprised to see how useful she has been during Alfred's sickness, and I, Mamma, am of as much use as that gay colored butterfly there on Auntie's bed of sweet-williams."

"Don't talk in that way my dear child; you are a world of comfort to us all. Anxiety over Alfred has given you lowness of spirits."

"Alfred's sickness has been a source of retrospection to me. I have heard of good resolves being made upon the sick bed, but mine were formed by the side of one."

Jessie's cup of joy seemed full to overflowing. Alfred improving and her own

loved Mamma with her. The extreme anxiety and hurried journey had greatly fatigued Mrs. Attwood who was indeed frail at her best, so leaving Alfred who was sweetly sleeping, she went to her room and was followed soon after by Jessie who seated herself in a low chair beside her, laid her head in her mother's lap, and gave vent to her pent up feelings in a flow of happy tears.

"My dear little daughter,"—and the mother stroked her child's head fondly. "Are you homesick now that Mamma has come?"

"Oh no, not at all. I am crying for joy Mamma. Is not our blessing just now almost too great for us? I was going to my room to thank God for giving Alf back to us, but I thought I would like to come here and thank Him with you beside me. Don't you wish it so, dear Mamma?"

What could the worldly minded mother say? She could not forbid though she did not wish it so. Only for an instant she hesitated, then bowing her head upon her hand she said in almost a whisper—"yes, dear."

Slipping from her chair, Jessie knelt at her mother's knee, and began pouring out

her hearts thankfulness—William Attwood coming into the room, stood as if transfixed for an instant, then going forward he knelt beside his daughter and passing an arm around her bowed his head with her. Very earnest and simple was the prayer that was uttered. A prayer as if the suppliant was closely identified with the Master, as if she had long been walking with him.

At its close, William Attwood followed with earnest petition for forgiveness; a pleading for mercy, and an outpouring of thankfulness for the great good that came to him in the gathering into the Master's fold of this dear one of his household, and also asking that they might all be united in serving aright the blessed Jesus, who came to seek after and save such as they. Mrs. Attwood sobbed out "Amen," and Jessie arose from her knees, truly happy.

"My dear child," said her father "you have indeed chosen the good part, God bless you."

"It has brought me so much happiness Papa, more than I can express to you," then Jessie slipped away to sit beside Alfred.

Mr. Attwood said to his wife, "I rejoice greatly over the knowledge that Jessie is a Christian. Would that we all were."

"Do you consider us not Christians William?"

"Are we happy trusting ones like she is."

"Oh hers is the excitement and enthusiasm so natural to youth. I can't say that I wish for it all. It certainly would induce a sanctimoniousness that I have no use for, and would debar one from so many of the real pleasures of life. I don't wish for it either in my ownself, or in my children."

"Oh, Helen!" said her husband sadly,—
"must some great sorrow come to you, before you can see how utterly alone you stand if you have not an ever present Saviour to uphold you, to walk with you through the shadows, and through the sunshine also?"

"I *cannot* bear a great sorrow, William; when that hour comes to me, I shall sink under it surely."

"Not if you have the One great Arm to lean upon. I would willingly shield you from all afflictions, but I am powerless to do so. There is only One who can; let Him

lead you, as I believe he is now leading our Jessie."

The gloom that seemed to enshroud the old homestead of the Attwoods was lifted when the joyful news from the sick-room was announced, and all seemed happy, except Norah, who was just then in a perturbed state of mind. Something entirely unlooked for had come into her domains, and she declared that she "had niver been so upsit, in all the years she had been in Ameriky."

Mrs. William Attwood foreseeing a great addition to the cares of her sister-in-law's household, on account of Alfred's illness, and thinking that help might be difficult to obtain in a country place, had brought a helper with her—a genuine Chinaman.

Ah Ling had been conducted to the kitchen by Will who informed Norah that here was a helper for her.

"*Pwwhat?*" came from the lips of the astonished woman with an emphasis that had Ah Ling been at all timid, would have lifted his queue, but he stoicly surveyed Norah and her surroundings, which raised her ire instantly, and Will saw at once in her flashing eyes, that there was no compromise

coming from Norah's quarter, in fact she looked very much as if war had been declared on her side. With arms akimbo and head thrown back, she looked the invader over from head to heels.

"Pwhat did ye say the haythin was here fer Willy?"

"To help you Norah," and Will's voice had a decidedly *tremulous* sound as if some pent up feelings might burst forth any minute.

"Shure oime not wantin help from that pig-tailed craythur. Pwhat's his name?"

"Aunt Helen says his name is Ah Ling."

"Well misther Arrah Ling, oive nothin' in this blissed wurruld for yees to do, still ye moight go out beyant there and sit on the fence, and till us what the weather may be loike tomorrow;—(sure he *do* look loike a weather cock Willy,)—but plaze don't come in, but announce it from the fence, for its upsittin' me it is to have ye be showin' yer quare face, and little pig eyes in me kitchen."

Turning to Will who was struggling to keep a sober face, and the peace thereby, she said—

"Pwhat quare clothing he wears to be

sure, and is he deaf and dumb, Willy?"

"I think not. Aunt Helen says he can turn his hands to almost everything, and you do need good help now Norah, and Mother feels quite anxious that you should have it. She says it was indeed kind and thoughtful in Aunt Helen to bring help with her."

"Arrah there is foine hilp oui can have Willy. Me own Sister's gurrl will come ony day and will wurruck with me, and oide ask for no bethur,—and she'd not be afthur adornin' hersilf as the loikes o'this one does aithur. And Willy if the mon can turn his hands to almost oything, perhaps he can turn his *toes* toward the station and lave us paceably. Oh wurrah, wurrah!"

And thereupon Norah's apron went over head, and she into a chair, knowing well that as usual, she had won her case, and Mrs. Attwood thinking that "discretion was the better part of valor," soon had the conservative Chinese on his way back to New York, and the next day after, pretty Molly Ryan was domiciled in the kitchen, and worked and sang as blythe as a robin, while Norah, as Will said, was still "cock of the roost."

Alfred's convalescence was slow, and anxious ones watched beside him. Amy desirous of carrying out her intentions of having some aim in life, and being more useful as well as anxious over the serious condition of her brother, devoted herself assiduously to him, and was indeed an apt nurse, but her constitution being much more delicate than Jessie's, it was deemed advisable for her to give way to her more robust sister, and so it was that the greater portion of Jessie's time came to be passed in the sickroom, her father having returned to his business after a few days stay and her mother being too delicate to endure the confinement long at a time of Alfred's room.

Jessie was just the kind of companion Alfred needed to cheer up, and drive off the depression so sure to come to the slowly recuperating invalid. He watched her curiously when she was not aware of the scrutiny. What was it? What had come over his Sister? She seemed so changed to him. He had always thought her the life and animation of their entire family, but in a kaleidoscopic manner with her changing moods of "tempest and sunshine" as he had teasingly told her—but now, she was, Alfred

thought, as fixed as the stars in her ways, and her spirits light as feathers. Alfred watched her with pleasure and curiosity blended, not knowing however, that Jessie had inward struggles, and hard battles to fight against the old nature, and too, he was unaware of her constant recourse to her Captain for munitions in her warfare.

"Jessie," said he one day as she was moving from one thing to another in his room, doing little bits of arranging of various articles, singing little snatches of songs, the while. "Whatever has happened to you? I can't quite make you out lately. Is it because I've been sick and things *seem* changed? do you know it seems as if I had lost our old tomboy Jet, and a new one had taken her place, who is dearer, and sweeter still."

"And you don't mourn the loss of the old one?"

"No,—really I don't seem to have lost the old one either—it is more like a great metamorphosis with a change indescribably sweet."

"Well, Alf I find so often that the old one is not lost, and have frequent enough battles with her I can tell you; but Alf dear,"

and Jessie came and sat beside him, and laid her happy glowing face down on the thin hand that was stretched out towards her, "I have such a dear sweet message waiting for you to become stronger, as you would be interested in it, for oh you *will* be interested, I am sure. Life is so sweet to me now, for I have Jesus with me—I am trying to keep Him with me. He is in these grand floods of sunshine—in these delicious breezes, these shifting clouds so softly tinted—in *everything* Alf, and every day brings me so much of sweetness, knowing He holds them all.

"I thought when I came here, that this was such a beautiful portion of the universe, but I had no conceptions of its beauty then as I have now when I view it through a Christian life."

Jessie you don't mean to tell me you are not a Christian, that we as a family are not?"

"I mean to tell you I was not. The life of Christ with his Apostles, and His ministry here on earth, teaches me that Christianity does not consist in name or church membership, but something far sweeter—a close companionship with Jesus."

"But Jessie, you say you are so happy,

how was it with you when I was very ill? Amy tells me that I was close to death then"—and the young man shuddered.

"Oh Alfred! how thankful I was then that I could trust Him, that I could put everything in His hands, and feel that he was right here constantly. I tremble when I think how helpless we all were then, or would have been were Jesus not with us."

"But if I had died then Jessie?"

"He who loved us so that He died for us, can do no wrong to those who love Him. God was merciful and did not take you Alf, and I feel that I cannot thank Him sufficiently—but if He had taken you, would He not have been merciful still? There is so much to be desired, yes everything, in this great love—Aunt Beth says we can be happy in its possession even under sore and sad bereavements, and I feel it, for while you were so close to the other world, and my heart seemed almost bursting, and I felt as if I must hold you fast to this life,—at the same time, strange as it may seem to you, I felt a joy in my heart that Jesus was so close to me, and an ever present help. He answered my prayer then, and I believe saved you Alf, to do Him service."

The young man looked out through the windows to the distant hills, with moistened eyes. Little tufts of vapory clouds moved lazily, softly before the deep blue of the summer sky. What a calm sweet look there was just then to everything in reach of his vision.

"What a little preacher you are Jet,—I'm more than ever convinced that we have lost the old one, but now really, I think these surroundings have much to do with your feelings. Your poetic soul is touched by all these beauties of hills, dales and woodlands, and I see no reason why these things should not elevate our thoughts and ambitions, but you will not feel this way when you get away from them. Those rows and rows of stately dwellings on either side of us—the stone pavements, not the green grass beneath your feet; when the singing of the robins is exchanged for the clatter, roar and thunderings of the passing vehicles, it will bring your thoughts and aspirations down to the old groove."

"But Alf, I'm not worshipping all these hills, dales and beauties of nature, but the Maker of them. When I first came here I believe I thought as you do, but there was

an unrest that the beautiful scenery did not satisfy, and a longing for something that the pure atmosphere did not give. It was the urgings of the Holy Spirit, Aunt Beth says.

"We must not talk any now, but when you are stronger we will have Aunt Beth join us, and it will be both pleasure and profit to listen to her."

CHAPTER VII.

One pleasant afternoon Alfred sat at one of the windows of his room, looking pale and thin; Jessie sat opposite, reading to him. The two Mrs. Attwood had gone with Amy for a walk, and as they were soon joined by Marjorie Kent, the two elderly ladies strolled off in an opposite direction from the one taken by the younger ones, who preceded them home. Alfred seeing them as they came up the garden walk, arm in arm, exclaimed,—

“Who is that fine looking young woman with Amy, Jessie? just look please. Isn't she indeed *very* pretty? do you know her Jet?”

Jessie looked, and then peeping slyly over the top of her book at him said, “It's only a '*rustic beauty*' Alf, but please don't interrupt me, I'm in *such* an interesting place of this story, and am anxious to hear what became of the hero.”

“Don't be hateful Jessie—tell me who she is, if you know. What a lovely face!”

“Seeing you have been very sick Alf, I

will try and not do anything so dreadfully hateful. That is Miss Marjorie Kent, and isn't she just sweet? Did you ever see a finer face on our Broadway?—She and Amy have struck up a wonderfully close and especial friendship for each other—a sort of mutual admiration society. She sent lovely flowers for your room while you were so very ill, and will call upon you perhaps, when you are able to receive. That is country etiquette,—how do you like it? Take my advice Alf, and don't attempt to receive until you can get yourself up in better style, for you look anything but fine now. Girls can look quite interesting as invalids—”

“Yes, and can say some cutting things too.”

“Oh you're getting better fast, but I was going to add, do you suppose a pale young man with his aunt's shawl over his shoulders and sitting with two long thin arms dangling over the chair arms, would look very killing?”

“He might *feel* like killing some one, if he had a sauce box of a sister drawing his portrait so accurately,” and Alfred smiled at the bright sweet face so full of mis-

chievous fun.—“Jessie I would be glad to give all of this season’s pleasure for the healthy glow that paints your plump face.”

“Alf, I would love to have you take in a whole season of the country enjoyments and real benefits that Chad and I have reveled in this summer, and I just hate to think we must go home as soon as you are well.”

“Jessie, one thing I am certain about; I’m heartily ashamed of my graceless speeches concerning country people. Dear Aunt Beth! I feel that I owe my life to her loving, faithful nursing—how capable she seems in every thing she attempts, she talks of books, poets, and the new authors as well as our friends in the Metropolis, and certainly such men as Uncle John and his boys, are nature’s noblemen.”

“I am *so* glad to hear you say that. It seems to me that the people here get the real enjoyment of life. Amy sees it in that light too, and Chad says “a country life for me if I live to be a man,” and Chad means every word he says too.”

“I don’t think it strange at all, for this summer has indeed worked wonders for Chad—but what will I do? I have asked myself that question very many times with-

in the past few days. I feel as if I ought to decide upon some business or profession. I don't suppose it was the plan of my Maker that I should stand idly about in this busy universe and watch the workers go by. The thought strikes me differently than it ever did before, though I cannot say why."

"Ha, ha Alf! you're surely getting it."

"Getting what?"

"The fever to do something. I do believe it is in the atmosphere of Fawndale, and is as sure to take as the malaria from the old well near the Mountain Retreat. You can't be here long without feeling as if you had been loafing all your time away, heretofore, and is sure to penetrate your entire system—The desire to do something, I mean. Chad and I got it severely, Amy has it now, and here you 'are coming down with it,' as they say of the measles."

"I suppose it is likely to wear off after we get back home."

"In case it does, I have made arrangements with Uncle John to come back here next summer, and get a new supply of vim, tan and freckles,—very essential parts of 'country graces.'"

"For pity's sake Jet! *don't* repeat my

hateful words; they sound intensely mean to me now. I wonder I could ever have given them utterance."

"And I wonder Alf, *why* I can't get rid of my old taunting hatefulness. I fear there will never be sufficient good in me to crowd out the evil. But really I did not intend to be hateful—I thought it would be funny to let you hear one of your old remarks."

"And it is well that I should, I presume—they somehow sound vastly different now than when uttered last spring, and I fancy I have changed somewhat, since then"—and he held up his thin hands and noted their transparency.

"Do you know," said Aunt Beth, the following day at dinner. "I'm going to prescribe this entire afternoon out, for Jessie; she is staying too closely in the sick room and is losing the pink from her cheeks."

Her mother gave her an anxious scrutiny, and readily agreed to the proposition.

"Mamma I believe I'm only getting the sunburn off, really."

"And you don't want a tramp and put more on, eh?" said Uncle John.

"Oh I'm in for a tramp willingly enough, and this is just the right sort of a day for

it, as I notice the sun seems to be shadowed a good bit of the time. Who are to be of the party?"

"I will sit with Alfred," said Amy.

"I took my tramp yesterday," said her mother,—“so you will please excuse me dear, as I don't feel equal to so much exercise."

"I think the party will comprise yourself and Chadsworth," said Aunt Beth, "for Fred can help the men gather in the oats, as it looks as if we might get rain tomorrow, and they need all the men in the field,—I shall need Kittie for some time after dinner to help with the preserving."

"My! but how our tramping party is dwindling away. Chad, what are you going to say about it?"

"I am at your service, Miss," said her brother, for I have missed our rambles together lately.

They were soon ready. Jessie with a basket on her arm in which she intended to bring home the spoils, consisting of moss, acorns and snail shells. Chadsworth had a book in his pocket that he had slipped there on the sly.

"'Merrily off to the woods we go,'" sang

Jessie, and she waved her basket to Alfred who watched them from his window.

"It does seem good to get off on one of our old tramps again, don't it Chad?"

"Yes, and as we are to go home as soon as Alf gets about, we are not likely to take many more."

"I don't think it would require much urging for Mamma to consent to come here herself another summer. Amy is on our side now, and Alf is likely to come over any day."

"I cannot see how he could speak favorably of the place mewed up there in his room as he has been ever since he came here."

"He is in love with the people now, and the place will come into favor later on."

"Jessie, this is such a shadowy day, that it would be delightful to row on the lake. Let's go there instead of to the woods, what do you say?"

"Just the right idea at the right moment, for here we are at the turn off for the lake. For my part, I think the woods would be fairly gloomy on such an afternoon as this."

And so it happened that a half hour later, one of the little rowboats was unfastened

from its moorings, and the twins, Jessie being the oarsman, "went out to sea." How calm and restful the little sheet of water seemed!—it was almost motionless. When nearly half way across Jessie took the oars from the sockets, and rested them across her lap, and the motion of the boat was barely perceptible.

"Now, said she, "if we had only planned for this, we might have brought our fishing tackle, and I'm sure we could carry home a nice string of catfish, for it is just the right sort of day for a good catch."

"Yes," said her brother," a regular catfish day—they take the bait readily just before a rain, but what a pleasant spot this is for reading"—and he produced the book he had surreptitiously pocketed before starting from home.

"Oh Chad, you unsociable monkey! What am I to do, while you sit and read?"

"I'll read aloud if you care for it—the book is very interesting."

"Thank you, I prefer to begin a book short of the middle. No, you read away, and I'll sit and dream—I'm just lazy enough and there seems to be such a calmness in these listless waters and their surroundings,

that makes me feel a desire to dream the afternoon away."

Her brother possibly heard a half dozen words, and then he was engrossed in his book. The opposite bank held her attention for a long time—its trees grew quite dense and irregular, so that little grottoes and alcoves seemed to be formed, and looked as if inviting one to rest in their shade, and Jessie felt singularly tired this afternoon, and wished she were there, but did not care to make the effort; so she speculated upon the lights and shadows that seemed full of suggestive mysteries which made it so easy for her to imagine that strange elfin creatures flitted back and forth in those little grottoes on the opposite side of the lake. Then she looked down at the boat's side as far as she could, and watched the fishes as they swam cautiously near, and then dart swiftly away.

She fell asleep sitting thus, and the oars slowly slipped from her lap into the water, all unheeded by Chadsworth, so deeply interested had he become in the pages before him. A perilous nod brought Jessie's eyes wide open, and she saw her oars out on the water; they were keeping a little distance

apart from each other, and entirely out of reach. Their situation flashed upon her, and she cried angrily—

“Chad Attwood! if this boat should turn upside down, would you be aware of it? Look at our oars out there, that is if you can take your nose out of that book long enough.”

“Oh Jet! isn't it *too* bad! and how stupid of me not to have heard them when they fell out. I don't wonder you feel angry.”

“Oh forgive me Chad, please do. It was me that was stupid, and why need I feel so hateful towards you—am I never to have my temper under control. I had been thinking lately that I had overcome some of my quickness, but I find I am the same ‘old spitfire’ as Alf used to call me.”

“I was to blame also, Jessie, but now what are we going to do? Unless a breeze springs up, we can't get near either shore very soon, and we don't want to stay here all night, surely.

“If our folks had only known we were coming here, matters wouldn't be so bad, for when supper time does not bring us, they would come here to see why; but now should they look for us they will scour the

woods, and all to no purpose.—Well, ‘we are in a boat,’ surely.”

“Yes, and without oars, I sigh to say, and as this is such a serious matter Jessie, you ought to consider that puns are not in order”—and Chadsworth caught the glimmer of a smile on the anxious face of his sister.

“It will be as dark as a pocket tonight”—and she looked upward—“see Chad, how thickly the sky is clouded. If Kittie were not busy all the afternoon helping Aunt Beth, she possibly might be in our room and see us, but it is not at all likely, for the work is all down stairs today. Oh dear! I’m afraid we are in for a night here, and a heap of worry at home over our absence. It will make Mamma sick, I know.”

“How about Alfred? I’m afraid he will fret over this.”

“I think Aunt Beth and Mamma will keep this from him somehow.”

The evening shades were creeping on and a light breeze sprang up—their boat began to drift slowly towards the shore. While the breeze was taking them to a possible landing, it also sent a chilliness over the water, that was quite perceptible.

"Oh Chad! I wish you had on a heavier coat," said Jessie shivering.

"I don't; this night air is just deliciously cool, not at all chilling to me."

"Well I'm certain you'll catch cold."

"Jet, you have forgotten that I am not the sickly fellow I was a few months ago; if either of us must pass for the invalid now, it must be you. Do you know you are getting positively thin, staying in with Alf so much. Now that he is getting better, let's take our old tramps again every day or so."

"Agreed, but I move we get off this lake first."

"We are getting there sure now."

The boat drifted along to within a few rods of the shore, then rocked idly, and seemed content to remain there—near them were a couple of water sogged logs, and the waves against them kept up a "plash, plash"—the frogs started in with their evening's croakings and the night birds began to pipe shrilly to their fellows.

"Never in my life," said Jessie, "did I dread the coming of night as I do now."

"One thing we must bear in mind Jet,—when it really gets dark, we must be careful 'to trim boat,' for if either of us gets a

little to one side, we might capsize, and down we would go to the bottom, sure."

"Well, I would as soon, as to stay here all night."

"No you wouldn't Jet, and you know it too, but what's the matter? You are as white as a ghost, and are shivering like it was winter."

"Oh Chad! I do feel wretched, and I'm *so* cold, my head aches too just horrid"—and Jessie burst into tears.

"Now I'll tell you what we poor little orphans had better do—eh, Jet?"

"Go ahead"—came from behind Jessie's pocket handkerchief.

"Before it gets any darker, I'll get on the seat beside you and my coat will reach over both our shoulders, and we will be more steady in the boat too, don't you see?"

"Yes, that's a good idea, and if we *must* pass the night here, we may as well arrange for it. How fast the darkness is coming on."

So two very sad hearted youngsters *tried* to settle down to a weary waiting for another day to dawn.

At Uncle John's that afternoon when tea-time came, all were surprised that the twins

did not make their appearance, and they felt some concern later on, but when darkness set in and they were still absent, real alarm was felt.

Taking lanterns, Mr. Attwood and the boys started for the woods. The usual paths were gone through, and calls sent forth, but nothing could be seen or heard of the lost.

They had come out to the edge of the woods on the opposite side from their starting point, when Fred said—

“Look there! what does that fire on the lake mean?”

“Sure enough” said his father, it certainly means something and we will go and investigate it right away. I believe those children are there, and in some kind of trouble no doubt.”

“I don’t think so,” said Will. I believe it is someone fishing. I can’t imagine what trouble they would be in out there. They are here in these woods, and are lost, and it seems like such a pity to leave our search here, and go there.”

“Well, we will hasten and go there, it will not take us long, and that light may be a signal from them,” said his father.

Sitting there with the usual night sounds around them, the two prisoners turned their thoughts to various ways of getting out of their trouble.

"I'm certain, Chad, that they are searching the woods for us, this very minute, and if we had some way of attracting their attention in this direction, we could bring them here, and we could do it I think if we had a match."

"Yes, I see, you would start a blaze, but what would you use?—we have no clothing to spare, surely."

"No, but in my basket is quite a large piece of paper, and I could make a taper of it, and it would make a light for several minutes I think."

"I have some matches in my jacket pocket. You know Fred and I took some ears of green corn into the woods with us a few days ago, built a fire there and had a roast, and I'm sure I did have some matches," and he began fumbling for them.

"Oh dear! I'm afraid you haven't any."

"Yes, here's one—no it isn't it's a tooth-pick."

"Do look in another pocket, you *must* have one Chad."

"Well here's one now, sure enough, and several more. Now I'll get the basket."

"No, no, *don't!* I know just where it is back of us, and I'm so afraid you'll tip the boat—I can get it easily."

It was indeed very dark now, but knowing just where to find the basket, Jessie could do so easily without lurching their little craft. She soon produced the taper which her brother lighted and held out at arm's length over the water.

This beacon was of short duration, and when gone, the situation seemed more doleful than ever. Jessie shivered and wept.

"Don't you wish Jet, that we had faith strong enough to bear us up so we could walk on these waters?"

"Yes, I do, but Chad, I don't seem to have any good about me, that will stand even a small test. I thought I was a Christian, but when I found those oars gone, I was angry and ready to abuse you."

"Never mind about me Jessie," said her brother soothingly, "I deserved it, and more"—

"And"—continued she, "here in all this strait we have been in, I have not once uttered a prayer to One who could help us,

because I let my old sinful nature rise as soon as I got into trouble. Oh Chad! I'm so heart sorry"—and she laid her head down on his shoulder and wept bitterly.

"Poor old Jet,"—and Chadsworth's tears fell too, and he added gently "don't you think there is One you should tell your sorrow to instead of me?"

"Yes," sobbed she, "but Chad, I felt so much ashamed of myself and I thought Jesus must be ashamed of, and angry with me, but perhaps He is waiting for me to ask Him to forgive."

"I think so, Jessie."

Then out from that little oarless boat in the darkness, an earnest prayer went up—a plea for forgiveness and protecting care during the night.

After unburdening her soul, the gloom did not seem so great to Jessie, and her old self seemed to return and she again began to devise plans for their escape from this "shipwreck" as she facetiously termed it.

"Chad do you remember the portion of Scripture? How the disciples toiled all night on the sea, and Jesus came down to the water's side and watched them. I think I can fancy how pleased they must have

been when He called to them, and they must have been happy when they heard His voice and felt that He was near them. I feel that He is near us now and the gloom is not so great—and Chad, I have a brand new idea too.”

“Well we have lots of time on our hands, and can sample every new idea, if it is within our reach.”

“It is this—the basket I have is made of strips of wood, and will of course stay up on the water—now if your have more matches, we will fill the basket with leaves from your book, drop a lighted match into it, set it on the water and let it burn up—we can in that way hold a light much longer than the other one.”

“Bravo, Jet! you’re in ahead every time, and ‘bound to win.’ Now I can count the book as my sacrifice to atone for getting so wrapped up in it that I did not hear the splash of the oars when they fell, for they certainly *must* have made a splash.”

Soon the little ark was placed upon the water, and it held the beacon light that guided their rescuers to them, for the previous one had burned out while they were

searching in the woods and had not been seen by them.

At the farmhouse too, it was seen. Kittie had gone to her room to offer up a prayer for the safety of her absent cousins, and looked tearfully out into the night and thought with a shudder, how very dark the woods must be. She saw the light on Fawn Lake and hastened to her mother whom she knew was in Aunt Helen's room, trying to comfort her.

"Mamma will you come to my room a moment please?"

Mrs. Attwood complied readily, and Kittie pointing to the lake said, "What do you think that means?—it is a fire out on the lake, I'm sure."

"Oh I scarcely know Kittie—I fear something serious has happened to those children, and the fire concerns them in some way, though in what manner I am not able to say. Do you wish to help in the search dear?"

"Oh indeed I do, *very* much. I feel as if I could *not* wait patiently here for them."

"Well, you go quietly down, and go over to Mr. Arnts—tell him about our worry and

ask him if he will go with you to the lake at once."

Mrs. Attwood returned to her sister's room, and truthfully told her, that as Kittie wished to assist in the search, she had allowed her to do so, and she would get their next neighbor to accompany her—"And now dear sister," she continued, "it only remains for us to entirely trust in the Allwise and loving One."

But the mother who heretofore had gone in her own strength, could not lean upon that strong arm now, and 'was like a reed shaken in the wind.' Apprehensive of some fearful happenings to her children she paced the floor, and wept bitterly.

The falls in the mountain brook which she had admired the day previous, now filled her thoughts with horror, for she feared that in the darkness of the woods, Jessie and Chadsworth might have missed their footing through the narrow mossy path, that had looked so pretty to her yesterday, and she had named it the Fairy Path around the Falls.

"Oh what changes come to us in a day even," she said "yesterday I pronounced those woods beautiful,—now I think of

them with horror, and almost fancy my dear boy and girl are lying lifeless within those dark shadows."

"Your anxiety causes you to portray a very improbable picture Helen; if they are still in the woods, no doubt they are sitting close under some tree, waiting for the moon to rise to light them out. There is really nothing in the woods to harm them, and those children are aware of that, still I think the situation must be dreary enough, waiting there in the darkness."

"And so utterly alone."

"No, not alone, Helen. Jessie and Chadsworth have learned to love and lean upon One who is ever present, and they no doubt prize that companionship tonight as they never did before."

But these words brought no comfort to the anxious mother for she walked alone.

CHAPTER VIII.

The little ark with its contents had burned down to the water's edge, and black darkness was again enshrouding our youthful mariners when their ears were greeted with a loud "hello" from Cousin Harry.

It was promptly answered by both Jessie and Chadsworth, and in their excitement they nearly capsized the boat.

"What are you doing out there?"

"Sitting in a boat without any oars."

"Is the other boat at its moorings?"

"Yes."

"Are you all right?"

"We would be if we had some oars," said Chadsworth.

"Or some wings"—called out Jessie.

"How could it have happened," said Will, as Harry hurried off for the other boat, after calling to his cousins that he would be around there in a 'jiffy.'

"We will very soon know, I daresay," said his father,—but you and Fred had better hurry right home, and let them know

we are coming all right, and be careful that you don't excite anyone there."

On the very first intimation at the farm house that the ramblers possibly had lost their way out of the woods, Norah's lamentations burst forth, and it took all the tact and firmness of Aunt Beth to keep down an uproar, for in Norah was an excitable nature and to her way of thinking the occasion demanded a great outburst of weeping and wailing. In the kitchen, with pretty Molly for an audience she gave vent to her feeling, though in a modified form.

"It takes me heart out, Molly, to think o thim lyin' there in the darkness, the pretty darlins, stark and stiff, wid all the creepin craythurs a crawlin' over thim. Oh wurra! wurra!"

"Aunt Norah," said her niece, "I'll warrant they are this blessed minute sittin' cuddled up by some tree, waitin' for the moon to rise."

"Waitin' for their coffins, more loike it is"—was the disconsolate rejoinder—"but Mollie, oime thinkin' they'll not be afther wantin' us inside now shure, and we'll go to the brow o' the hill beyant, and listhen

for the wailin' o'thim whin they foind the poor dears."

So Norah and Molly set out for the hill, and while there the light on the lake caught their attention.

"Phwat moight that be Molly?—a light on the water, and a quare kind o' a light too oime thinkin'." They watched it wonderingly, and as it was the taper light it soon disappeared, and Norah sat up a disconsolate wail.—

"Oh wirr! wirra! it's the 'will-o-the wisp' the warnin' light o'death—oive seen it before Molly—wance in the auld counthry, whin comin' by the bogs o' Ballybrack I see it and it come a rollin' right along befront o' me, and thin wint out without a sphark bein' left behind it; sure and didn't me own brother Tim (yer uncle, my dear), be afther comin' home dead and lifeless within a fortnight afther. Oh it's gone dead they are now, shure the poor dears"—and Norah sat down by the wayside and rocked herself back and forth, moaning dismally the while.

"And now Molly ——— should I be goin' to the house and tillin' thim oie wonder, or shall we be afther waitin' here for the bringin' o' the bodies?"

"Let's wait here awhile Aunt Norah until some of them come along"—said Molly who did not share in her Aunt's superstition to any extent, but felt some curiosity as to the light, and wanted to watch for its reappearance. So she leaned upon the wayside fence, and Norah sat on the grass at her feet. It seemed like a long time to Molly standing there and looking intently in the direction of the lake, but at last the basket was put out on the water to burn, and its light was seen instantly by her. She drew her Aunt's attention to it, or attempted to do so, but Norah rocking and moaning looked neither to the right nor the left. To Molly's remark that there was another light, she said—

"Yis av coorse, there would be two av thim, for there do be two av the children."

"Come Aunt Norah, *do* look please, and tell me what you think it is—by the light of the fire, I think I can see a boat with one person sitting in it. Maybe 'tis the children out there, instead of being in the woods."

At this, Norah left her wailings of which no doubt, she was getting tired. She pronounced it a different one from the former one, which in her mind was surely a 'will-o-

the-wisp.' They watched the light until it burned out, Norah in the meantime, conjecturing all sorts of impossible things concerning it,—one was that Jessie and Chadsworth were there drowning and had lighted a blaze to tell their friends about it, but when the light went out, she had them back in the woods all 'stark and stiff' the poor dears."

And it so happened that Kittie and Mr. Arnsts on their way to the lake found Norah and Molly on the hill, and just then Will and Fred came along on their way home and told them they had found Chadsworth and Jessie safely rocking in a boat out on the lake, but without any oars. Harry had gone out in the other boat to tow them in, and they would all be home in a few minutes and then they would all know just how it happened, for he had not yet found out.

So they turned their faces homeward; Norah's wailings were now turned to scoldings, and she averred with great emphasis, that "the loikes of such children to sthir a body up was niver before known, and instead o' traipsin around at this time o' night, me poor ould limbs should be in bed."

It was a glad sight to our mariners when Harry's boat came alongside and the lantern's light shone on his handsome jovial face.

"Ship Ahoy!" shouted he.

"Aye! Aye!" answered Chadsworth.

"Well, I'm in the biggest stew I ever was, to know how you came to be in this plight."

"Well Harry, I fell asleep with the oars across my lap."

"And I sat with my nose in a book at that critical time," said Chadsworth.

"And what a heap of trouble and worry we have brought to you all by the means."

"And what a rejoicing there will be when you get there—but how about the fire, what did you make it from?"

When told by Chadsworth he exclaimed—"You are a born genius Jessie and could figure right well in an adventure more tragical than this, even."

"Oh dear! this is tragical enough," whined Jessie.

"It was the basket light that saved you from spending a summer's night on the bosom of Fawn Lake. How romantic a situation!"

"Oh yes, it sounds poetical enough, but oh

how I want to be at home this very minute"—and Jessie's utterance seemed choked with tears.

Harry held the lantern up so that its rays fell upon her face, and he exclaimed "you are as pale as the dead, Jessie—were you badly frightened? Chad seems as cool as a cucumber."

"I was not frightened, Harry, I'm sure, for I did not feel as if Chad and I were alone for a moment even. We had committed ourselves into His keeping, who holds these waters in his hand—but Oh, I *do* believe I am more than half sick and do so long to get home."

"Well you shall as quickly as possible—Chad make this chain fast to your boat, or hold it, and I will tow you to shore. You see we are quite a distance below our landing, but I will soon make it."

After climbing out at the landing, Jessie sank down on the bank shivering and in tears.

"Poor Cousin! you are sick surely" said Harry.

His father coming up exclaimed—

"What, Jessie sick?"

"Yes, and I think I had better go home and drive over for her."

"No, no, I can walk," said Jessie springing up. "I'm sure I could *not* wait here. I never remember of being sick, and maybe I am not now."

"Harry and I can get you home nicely," said her Uncle. "We will make a 'chair' of our four hands, you seat yourself in it, and be carried home in fine style." The plan worked well, as the distance was not great.

"Harry, did Alf worry any over our absence?" she anxiously asked as they proceeded homeward.

"No, not at all. We thought to keep it from him, but he came out so square toed with his questions, that Amy felt obliged to tell him—but he took it cool enough. His theory was, that you had gotten turned about and would come out on the other side of the woods and that would of course take you into the evening to get home."

"Mamma worried, I am sure of that," said Chadsworth.

"Yes, but Mother is with her, and will keep her composed. Norah was up to the highest notch when I came away, and it is easy to see who of our entire household loves you

best. If you could have heard just *one* of Norah's wails it would have satisfied you.

"That we could get along nicely without any more," said Chadsworth.

To Jessie, the distance from Fawn Lake to the old farm house, seemed interminably long, but it was finally accomplished and she was in bed, leaving Chadsworth to recount the exploits of the afternoon, and dispose of a big amount of supper to Norah's entire satisfaction.

Everyone expected that after the excitement and anxiety of the day, a good night's sleep would restore Jessie, and that was really what she needed, consequently they were surprised and alarmed the following morning to find her very ill, and as they supposed, from last night's exposure.

The father and a physician were immediately summoned; the latter informing them that it was a clear case of fever, and was not, so far as he could ascertain, aggravated in the least by the dampness of the lake as her mother had feared. To her own family it was a matter of great surprise that Jessie should be sick, from a baby she was considered by her Mother as the entirely robust one of her children, and now it seemed so

sadly strange to see her lying there, looking so unlike herself unconsciously moaning or wildly delirious.

It is often noticeable that fever takes a firmer hold upon hardy constitutions, and the weaker ones have but a weak battle to fight, but the recuperation is more rapid with the former, than with the latter.

Alfred had not the hardihood that his sister possessed, neither did his disease reach the extent that Jessie's did. The shadows deepened over the old homestead of the Attwoods. The father hung over his fading treasure, and at the same time trying to comfort his sorrowing family—the mother clung fiercely to her child. Those long dreary days! were they ever to be lived through? and those nights still longer than the days! oh they were horrors, but they came with all their regularity and apprehensiveness and the loving sorrowing ones waited and watched.

There came to the mother that scene of Jessie kneeling at her knee and offering up a prayer of thankfulness over Alfred's recovery—the memory of it would not be shut out—why should she not approach the same Jesus, and ask to be permitted to keep her

darling with her? Her name was listed on the record of her home church, along with those who believed in Him, but when had she knelt and offered up a prayer other than a set form of words? She went to her own room, and attempted to approach the Throne; her set form of words was of no use to her now—they seemed meaningless indeed—no, they could not fit her present need.

She supplicated the Throne, but she realized that it was not love for Him who sat thereon had brought her kneeling there. It was a stormy pleading and brought no peace or comfort to the suppliant, for there was no submission to the Divine will.

At the evening devotions there were earnest heartfelt prayers offered for Jessie's recovery, and Mrs. Attwood contrary to all her previous expectations had come to looking forward to these hours of family worship with earnest longings, for she doubted not the nearness to the Master, of these humble Christians, and she felt that their intercessions would not be in vain. Their approach to Jesus, was as children appealing to an earthly parent, and they

seemed to be in close touch with the One they supplicated.

How utterly alone she now was!—the buffetting winds of sorrow and storms of anguish, were sweeping over her, and she had nothing to which she could anchor—her husband could not keep back death from her child. She knew there was One who could, but she had ignored that One,—she had given society her service, not God. She saw it all now, and cried out the confession with a contrite heart—it was a full confession, and a pleading for mercy.

She returned to Jessie's bedside, bending over her, she heard the words of "a peace that passeth understanding"—it was murmured from the parched lips of the sufferer lying there. With the tears raining down her cheeks the mother cried out. "Lord Jesus I submit to Thy will, do as it seemeth good to Thee, but Oh! grant unto me that 'peace that passeth understanding,' and make me submissive to thy will."

"Amen," said her husband fervently.

The day soon came when they clustered around the bedside, and fancied they could feel the flutter of the wings of the death angel close beside them. Chadsworth

knelt beside the bed with his face buried in one of the pillows and sobbed bitterly. This was their birthday—sixteen years had come to them, and they had never been separated a day—their dispositions so entirely dissimilar, had always been congenial and they had seemed inseparable, but now it appeared as if the tie must be broken. Surrounded by her weeping friends, Jessie lay all unconscious of their sorrow.

“Oh! how sadly she is changed,” said Alfred—“I can scarcely see a look of our Jessie here—is she really going out from us? and on this her birthday too?”

“I fear so,” said his father brokenly—“she seems to be sinking rapidly.”

“She told me one day while sitting beside me”—continued Alfred—“that even when she felt that I was so close to death, she experienced in her sorrow over my condition, a joy that the Christian feels in reposing upon the strong arm of Jesus—I wish we might have that joy now to sustain us in our great sorrow.”

“My dear son,” said his mother, “I wish I could make Jessie understand that the great gift of God’s love has come to me, and I can feel to repose on His strength as I

know she has. Oh William" and she turned towards her husband with the tears falling over her cheeks—"she was given to us for only a short time, but she has unconsciously led me to her Jesus."

"For which God be praised that her life has not been a fruitless one," said her husband, with deep emotion—"I am indeed thankful that the Comforter has come to you. We are now passing through the shadows, and we dare not walk alone. We must reach out, and grasp His hand and He will lead us safely through.

The entire household was assembled—Norah and Molly just within the door. Amy had been asking that her sister might rally sufficiently to leave some parting words with them, and now the sunken eyes opened and beheld the weeping ones around her. She feebly extended her hand, which her mother clasped fondly.

"Keep me with you Mamma," she faintly whispered.

"If I only could my darling" sobbed the heart stricken mother.

"This is such a beautiful world, I have found it more beautiful still since I have found Jesus so much to me, and I long to

remain in it; I would like to be spared to live this life and live it well."

"If it were God's command that you go now, my dear daughter?"—asked her father.

"Then His will be done," she murmured, and again her eyes closed,—closed for a long quiet sleep, with no mutterings or moanings of the delirium that had been present heretofore. About her brow the soft hair curled up in moist little rings, showing that the fever had gone out, and her breathing was like that of a sleeping infant. The shadows were lifting from the old homestead—Jessie was *surely* better!

The tears that now coursed down the mother's cheeks, were tears of joy, and she murmured, "God be praised! He has opened my heart to love Him, and I believe He has given me back our own darling Jessie."

"Surely goodness and mercy have followed us all our days," said her husband as he fondly clasped the hand that lay in his. This is indeed a happy moment Helen, and may this with us, be the beginning of a life spent in God's service."

And Mrs. Attwood said, "An entire life's

service could not compensate for this great blessing, and I have but a poor remnant to give, but I gladly tender that."

"Mamma," said Chadsworth "If you could have seen Jessie all this summer, you would think that the reward comes hourly to the serving Christians—her spirits were light as feathers, and she has told me so often, how peacefully happy she felt. I think she must have had some struggles nevertheless, for you know her ways while at home."

"Yes, tempest and sunshine; her disposition ever reminded me of April weather."

"But she has found a peaceful Haven,—our dear old tomboy!" and Amy bent lovingly over the sleeper, and laid her cheek against the pallid one, for an instant.

Aunt Beth was quick to see that the quiet even breathing told that a change for the better had taken place, and feeling that the situation just then was sacred to Jessie's own family, quietly signaled to her own household, and they withdrew from the sick room.

How solemn and impressive seemed the very atmosphere to the little group around the unconscious sleeper!—Their hearts

were very tender now, and they fully realized their love for the one lying there. They had walked with her down into the valley, close among the shadows, and now they felt as if she had been given back to them, through deep anguish of soul, each heart had found its way to the highest truth, —entirely unconscious of the act, Jessie had led them all to her Jesus, and now a penitent and thankful group knelt for the first time together in prayer, and was led by William Attwood.

The autumn time was at hand, the trees about the old homestead no longer cast their shadows, but under their spreading branches lay a carpet of rustling leaves—

“And on the hill the golden rod,
The astor in the wood,
The yellow sunflower by the brook,
In Autumn beauty stood.”

There were whisperings all night long among the trees that autumn had come—the rasping chirp of the insects never ceasing through the entire night seemed to be singing the summer away—a sort of requiem, Jessie thought. She was soon to go down

stairs for the first time since her sickness—tomorrow maybe, and like many another one after a long illness, she passed wakeful hours, and listened to the night sounds.

The chirpings of the crickets and cicadas, she arranged into a sing-song in a minor key, and finally fell asleep while tracing the rhythmical motion of the queer little nocturnal band.

"A creature not too fair or good,
For human nature's daily food."

quoted Chadsworth the following morning, as he came into Jessie's room bearing a tray containing her breakfast.

"What! all of that for me Chad?"

"Yes Miss; and you are to devour this entirely for downstairs you go today sure. The doctor says after you are once out you will regain your old strength rapidly. We all hope to go home in a week—won't that be jolly?"

"I am sure we will all enjoy gathering around the old home tree; don't you think so dear?" and Mrs. Attwood passed her hand carressingly over the golden head resting against the chair cushion.

"Yes, Mamma, I long to be at home again, but this will ever be a dear old place to me.

I shall miss our evening prayer circle, for I have come to love it so much."

"You will then look forward with pleasure to our own prayer circle"—and Mrs. Attwood laid her cheek against the transparent one beside her and said—

"My dear little daughter, the family altar will be erected around our own hearthstone, and please God our idols will be thrown down and out.

"It is not necessary to tell you Jessie, that Papa is very happy over it."

And Jessie answered—

"Oh Mamma! I am so happy too."

THE END.

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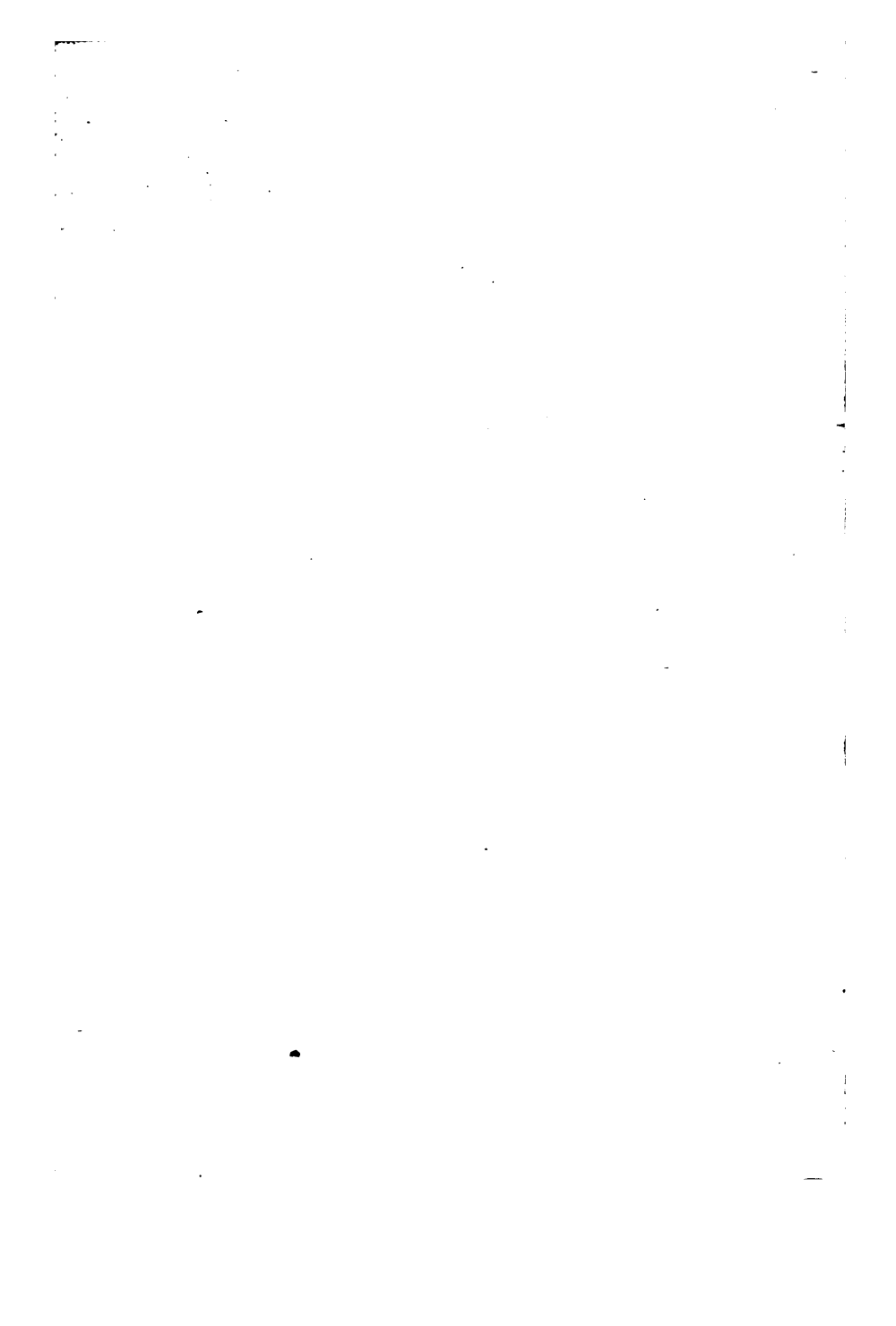
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